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A Happy Morning at McDonald's



Representative Cynthia Davis welcomes a new business to O'Fallon at the ribbon cutting for McDonald's Restaurant, located at the intersection of I-70 and Lake St. Louis Boulevard.

Healthcare Debate at Webster University

Last week, I participated in a bipartisan panel discussion on the status of healthcare in Missouri, hosted by the Greater St. Louis Parish Nurse Network at Webster University. I was invited to represent a Republican point of view because of my role in healthcare legislation as the Vice-Chair of the Healthcare Policy Committee for the House of Representatives.

As the sole representative from my side of the aisle, I was allowed to speak for four minutes on each question, and the two Democrats on the

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panel were given two minutes each for their responses.

Actually, healthcare should not be a partisan issue. Both parties have failed in many areas to capture the essence of simply helping sick people. It seems like Democrats are pushing for more socialized medicine and some Republicans are pushing everybody to purchase a private insurance policy.

Socialized medicine is a failure because it offers poor, or at least mediocre, quality care for everyone. However, making everybody get an insurance policy will never happen either. In Massachusetts, the legislature mandated that all individuals obtain medical insurance and is subsidizing insurance for low-income individuals. However, hospitals still receive uninsured patients. The volume-savings argument has failed as well. Although difficult to evaluate, Massachusetts did not bring their healthcare costs per enrollee down. The state only subsidized a greater number of new enrollees, which placed a strain on its budget. My thanks goes to the good people of Massachusetts who are performing a live experiment for the rest of the nation to observe.

Here are some of the questions asked of each panelist:

Question 1. What existing healthcare services to the insured would be stopped or cut back if all people had access to equal health care?

My response: Why presume the two are correlated? When the words “healthcare” and “insurance” are used interchangeably, it confuses the issue. The two are not the same and must be separated if we are to understand the problems and find the correct solutions. It is entirely possible to have healthcare without having insurance. It is also possible to have insurance without having good healthcare. Insurance industry sellers and consumers operate independently. Until we standardize our vocabulary and definitions, it is no wonder we are having difficulty understanding each side of the debate. (I’ll bet this is how Noah Webster felt before he wrote the first dictionary!)

Getting back to the question about what services to the insured would be stopped: The only way to make things worse for those who currently have medical insurance would be for government to create additional regulations to interfere with the balance. Missouri already has more insurance mandates than most states. Each time we add yet another requirement onto our insurance companies, we drive the price up higher and higher. As the premiums continue to escalate, fewer people can afford to purchase private insurance.

Question 2. How much does it cost Missouri NOT to offer health care to all residents?

My response: It costs Missouri to offer health care. With Medicaid, the more expenses are paid by the taxpayers, the more fraud is perpetrated. Taxpayer fraud doesn’t happen as much when doctors know their patients and when patients pay for their services.

For example, a few days ago, the *Wall Street Journal* reported on an investigation that found that over 100 million of taxpayers’ dollars were paid to dead doctors. The number could go higher because the study only included doctors that had been dead for over a year when the claims were filed. What about the doctors who had been dead for a

shorter amount of time? (Click here to read the beginning of the article: "[Medicare Is Hit by Dead-Doctor Billing Scams](#)," July 8, 2008.) If that \$100 million had gone to legitimate doctors and hospitals, how many more people could have been treated for their accidents and illnesses?

"Big Healthcare" has the same problems inherent to "Big Oil" and "Big Government." Local government will always be more personal, effective and efficient. A system that provides motivation for thrift and acknowledges personal responsibility is the path to a program that serves both the informed consumers as well as the providers. Furthermore, we must ask, "Is the goal to help people or make money?"

Question 3. How do the healthcare services provided for Missouri citizens compare with those that are available in Illinois?



My Response: On this question, I have a "good news" answer. We have much to be proud of when it comes to our quick service retail clinics, which is a free-market response to healthcare issues. The clinics usually are staffed by a nurse practitioner who can diagnose and prescribe for ear infections, strep throats, bronchitis, pink eye, and other

common maladies that can be successfully treated with basic antibiotics. If you are not familiar with these, they can be found in some Walgreens and Schnucks stores. In the St. Louis area, Missouri has more of these than on the Illinois side. Click here for locations inside Walgreens in our area: [Clinic Locations](#).

Ultimately, giving the consumer more options in healthcare will always result in better decisions and lower costs. Finding the correct answers to healthcare questions will depend on our ability to think innovatively and to allow free market principles to operate in the medical industry.

Your thoughts are important to me, so please let me know what you think about these healthcare issues. You can send me your opinion by clicking here: [Cynthia Davis](#).

Two weeks ago, I presented a cooking demonstration to clients of the North East Community Action Corporation. In case you missed it, here is a link to an article in the *St. Charles Journal* yesterday:

[State rep shows off cooking skills](#)

A Little Bit of Humor...

Little Susie, a six-year-old, came home from school whining, "Mommy, I've got a stomach ache."

"That's because your stomach is empty," her mother replied. "You'd feel better if you had something in it." She gave Susie

a snack and sure enough, Susie felt better right away.



That afternoon a family friend dropped by. While she was chatting with Susie's mom, she mentioned she'd had a bad headache all day long.

Susie perked up, "That's because it's empty," she said. "You'd feel better if you had something in

it."

This Capitol Report is a weekly newsletter by Representative Cynthia Davis, from the 19th District, covering events in the Missouri Legislature and district-wide issues.

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