

Citizens Say “NO” to Medicaid Cuts

Excerpts from “Letters to the Editor”

Missourians are speaking out. Now it's your turn. Call, e-mail or write Governor Blunt and leaders in the House and Senate. (see last page for how to reach them)

Immoral Cuts

It seems to me that our elected officials should be striving to strike a balance between cutting waste, improving efficiency, and increasing revenue. **I don't like the thought of paying higher taxes. But if these immoral cuts are the alternatives, I see no other choice.**

*James Mitchell
St. Louis, MO
St. Louis Post Dispatch, Feb. 17, 2005*

Governor is Ill-advised

Gov. Blunt, you are being ill advised on mental health and disabilities issues. Clearly you are bright and come from a family of credible politics. **Please don't let these initial recommendations stand and become a part of your legacy.**

*John Solomon
Gravois Mills, MO
Jefferson City Post Tribune, Feb. 9, 2005*

Blunt Promised to Protect

Families of children with disabilities are stretched thin both financially and emotionally. **Blunt promised to protect Missouri families.** It appears his promise does not include the families of children with disabilities.

*Paul McFerron
Advance, MO
SE Missourian, Feb. 26, 2005*

Many Will Suffer

Some will be treated at the expense of our hospitals, whose emergency rooms will see an increase in uninsured patients. Some recipients will be forced to cut back their work hours so their income doesn't disqualify them for Medicaid. **Many more are likely to suffer from untreated ailments and die sooner.** Man's inhumanity to man never ceases to amaze me!

*Patricia Pollock
Jefferson City, MO
Jefferson City Post Tribune, Feb. 9, 2005*

Others Must Pay for Uninsured

Once again, Gov. Matt Blunt has put politics ahead of the interests of Missourians. While it may look good at first glance to reduce the number of people on Medicaid, the only way there will be any saving is if those people don't get sick. When they get sick, they'll go to the emergency room...and because they are uninsured, the charges will be 30 to 40% higher. Since they won't be able to pay those charges, these costs will be spread among those who have insurance. **Missourians will pay the entire cost of this treatment in higher insurance premiums and higher prices for treatment, rather than the federal government paying 60 percent of the expenses at a lower overall cost. Thanks, Gov. Blunt.**

*Francis J. Carr
Sunrise Beach, MO
St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Feb.16, 2005*

Budget Must Reflect Values

Blunt's proposal is a lose-lose situation. Education remains grossly underfunded, and healthcare becomes a privilege that is inaccessible to thousands of low-income, elderly and disabled Missourians.

Each year, we pour more money into highway repair while the quality of our children's education deteriorates. We readily accept our Hancock refunds, yet more and more children and their parents are unable to access health care.

Are these Missouri's values? Is this the country that we want our children to grow up in? Are we really treating our children as if they are our future?

As citizens of Missouri we must ask ourselves where our values lie and demand that our legislators create a budget that reflects those values.

*Kristy Klein
University City, MO
St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Feb. 13, 2005*

Finding the Money for Health Care

It is hard for me to understand why our state budget should be balanced on the back of those who are most in need of help.

We could choose to increase our income, ... we could maintain healthcare for thousands by...enacting a higher excise fee on alcohol. We haven't increased this fee in over 30 years. We could raise the meager tax we charge on tobacco products. Missouri has one of the lowest tobacco tax rates in the nation. We could also close tax loopholes that unfairly favor large, out-of-state corporations.

Helping people who have no chance of getting healthcare on their own is doable if our elected officials will just choose to do it.

*Cynthia Keele
Jefferson City, MO
SE Missourian, Mar. 4, 2005*

Medicaid Costs Less

Medicaid has been a hugely successful program and costs less than private insurance. The Missouri League of Women Voters doesn't believe the best way to balance the Missouri budget is to cut Medicaid and the other programs that help our most vulnerable citizens.

*Dr. Rea Beck Kleeman,
MO League of Women Voters
St. Louis
SE Missourian, Feb. 27, 2005*

Try Other Options First

I voted for Missouri Gov. Matt Blunt. I believe in making tough decisions. But I also believe in common sense and rational thinking. Medicaid is broken, but you don't amputate before you try other options. **Mr. Blunt proposed to lower the qualification from 70% of poverty to 30%. I have enough common sense to know that poverty is already poverty, and that people don't usually choose to be there. ...the unfortunate don't need more "kicking**

*Steve Roberson
Kansas City, MO
Kansas City Star, Mar. 13, 2005*

Better Solutions

I think the good people of Missouri can create better solutions to our budget challenges than balancing the books on the backs of our most needy: the poor, the sick, the handicapped and the mentally ill. Who said, "What you do unto the least of my brethren, you do unto me?"

Personally, I am willing to raise taxes to make Missouri a state I can be proud of again. Gov. Matt Blunt's proposals to reduce services to the neediest among us is an embarrassment.

*Beverly Blase
St. Louis, MO
St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Feb. 9, 2005*

Preventive Care Less Costly

Gov. Matt Blunt's budget proposals are appalling and alarming. **A governor who campaigned on his faith and moral values, Blunt has no qualms about cutting nearly 90,000 women, the elderly and the disabled from Medicaid.** It's disturbing that Blunt is quoted describing Medicaid as a "welfare" service. Medicaid is not welfare. Medicaid dollars go to providers such as doctors, hospitals and labs that treat patients with Medicaid coverage. The women, elderly and disabled don't get a dime from Medicaid; they get to go to the doctor. With adult-age women accounting for nearly 70 percent of Medicaid enrollees, it's difficult to think where these women will turn for health care. **Apparently Blunt doesn't care that preventive measures are cheaper than emergency room visits - where no one can be denied treatment.** It seems the governor is sending a message loud and clear that poor women don't deserve to get a regular check-up. Blunt's Medicaid proposals are immoral. The cuts would increase the number of uninsured Missourians and cost the state nearly \$700 million in economic activity and more than 9,400 jobs. **In a time when our state is already in the red, it seems our governor should try to prevent these things rather than promote them.**

*Laura Hutton
Columbia Tribune, Mar. 9, 2005*

Reality Check

People of Missouri, call your state representatives, the governor, lieutenant governor, or whoever. My husband and I are living on less the \$8,000 a year and are barely making it. **People with AIDS, mental disabilities and physical disabilities are being told "Sorry, no help for you."** Blunt needs a big reality check if he thinks this is going to pass without a fight from the people.

*Marianne Slayton
Springfield, MO
Springfield News-Leader, January 30, 2005*

Our Business Doesn't Need State Subsidy

We own a small business that collects sales tax on the merchandise we sell. What most people may not realize is that by state law we get to keep part of the sales tax we collect. Our business, like most, is computerized. It just takes a few minutes each month to complete the form and send the check to the state. I calculated that the state is paying us over \$800 per hour based upon the amount we keep and the amount of time it takes us to process the form.

I question whether it is morally right to keep the sales tax when others are losing services due to the state's budget problems.

I have decided that keeping part of the sales tax is not doing justice for others. We have decided to send 100 percent of the sales tax we collect to the state. Our decision will not significantly affect the profit margin of our business and it will not make much difference for the state budget, but it is the right thing to do.

*Garland Land
Jefferson City, MO
St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Mar. 10, 2005*

Unable to Make Do

Gov. Matt Blunt thinks that the disabled of Missouri can make do on 75 percent of the poverty for a month, or \$579 in my case. I am on something called TPN. Through Medicaid, I can get my TPN at home and live a moderately normal life. Without Medicaid, the only way I would be able to get my TPN would be if I were in a nursing home. Of course without Medicaid, I would not be able to afford the other medications that keep me alive, so I guess the idea of living in a nursing home is moot. I guess this is a way for the governor to cleanse the state of the dregs that Missouri is spending on unnecessarily.

*Michael Pratt
St. Louis, MO
St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Mar. 10, 2005*

How to Contact Governor, Legislators

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Jefferson City, MO 65101

Senator Michael Gibbons
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573-751-2853
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State Capitol Building, Room 326
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Senator Chuck Gross
Appropriations Chairman
573-751-8635
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State Capitol Building, Room 423
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Representative Rod Jetton
House Speaker
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Missouri House of Representatives
201 West Capitol Ave., Room 308
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Representative Brad Lager
Budget Chairman
573-751-9465
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How to Contact Your Senator and Representative

To find out who your legislators are and how to
contact them call:

573-751-3659

Or visit:

www.senate.state.mo.us
www.house.state.mo.us

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Missouri's budgetary and tax policy options
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