

The Miami Herald

Posted on Sun, May. 01, 2011

Kids vulnerable

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Florida's foster kids and others are the targets of harmful legislation being debated in Tallahassee. Senate Bill 1972 — the Medicaid reform bill — would give special legal treatment to private companies that receive taxpayer money to provide a majority of their medical, transportation and mental-health services to people with disabilities.

These companies are lobbying hard to get full protection of Florida's sovereign immunity, which means anyone entrusted in their care whom they hurt catastrophically would not be fully compensated for their injuries. Taxpayers would end up shelling out millions of dollars a year for the damage caused by these private Medicaid providers.

They claim they're dealing with an "insurance crisis," but our research shows that's not true. Their real motive is to avoid scrutiny in the courts. If, as they claim, they really want to provide more services, they don't need lower insurance rates; they can start by lowering their executives' salaries, which are as high as \$300,000.

We must fight to rid the bill of this sovereign-immunity language, as well as two stand-alone bills in the House and Senate (SB 966/HB 615) calling for the same thing.

We cannot allow our lawmakers to institute tort reform on the backs of children in state care and others with disabilities.

Christina Spudeas, executive director, Florida's Children First,

Coral Springs

Lawmakers misguided

While right-wingers in the state Legislature obsess about a women's right to choose, stopping abortion funding, changing redistricting to their own political advantage, stacking the courts with like-minded ideologues and favoring big business, instead of creating jobs, I ask them:

Where is the money going to come from to support unwanted children ? Are you going to adopt, feed, house and educate them? As you push to defund social programs and public education in order to save people a few bucks in tax money , can you see the bigger picture?

They can't only protect the unborn and then abandon them once they are born. Lawmakers' hypocrisies never cease to amaze me.

Judith Abramson, Aventura

Race at the root

I wonder how many people would question President Obama's birth if his name were John Smith or he had blond hair and blue eyes?

Unfortunately knowing the answer is an appalling commentary on race in America.

Bruce Shpiner, Miami

Mandich missed

Jim "Mad Dog" Mandich, we will miss your unique style. It will never be duplicated. From now on, after every Miami Dolphins touchdown at Sun Life Stadium, they should play a recording of "Alriiiiight Mi-yamiiii!!" — which you made so famous. Your energy, enthusiasm and honesty will be missed.

Jim Cox, Kendall

Empower nurses

Re Kester Nedd's April 24 letter, Laws turning doctors into 'criminals': If Florida caught up with the 47 states that allow Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners (ARNPs) to prescribe narcotics and practice in collaboration with physicians rather than being supervised by them, Dr. Selwyn Carrington would not be in trouble. ARNPs are master's-trained and, starting in 2015, will be required to obtain a doctorate.

Nurses are trusted professionals and look at the patient as a whole person and not just a disease process. ARNPs are a valuable asset to healthcare and can ease the strain on physicians who need to see too many patients in a day just to meet the financial needs of a busy practice.

ARNPs understand the importance of collaboration with physicians. ARNPs are not looking to steal the physicians' business but to meet patients' healthcare needs with compassion, care and professionalism.

Steve Lewis, RN, Miami

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