

# The Press & Dakotan

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861

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## OPINION OTHER VIEWS

# Health Care Back-Up Plan Is Prudent

**LINCOLN JOURNAL STAR (March 10):** Legal analysts offer differing predictions on how the U.S. Supreme Court will rule in the lawsuit that could strip the federal government of authority to provide subsidies to those who bought their health insurance on federal exchanges. However, everyone agrees that if the court eliminates the subsidies, the impact would be massive.

Credit Sen. Ben Sasse for trying to do something to soften the blow. Sasse last week introduced legislation to provide transitional financial assistance to those who lose their coverage. In an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal, Sasse said his bill uses as a model the existing "Cobra" law that allows those who leave their jobs to keep their health coverage for 18 months.

Make no mistake. Sasse remains an implacable foe of the Affordable Care Act. He wants to provide the assistance on the grounds that without it, the holdout states and their governors will fold under political pressure to adopt what he refers to as ObamaCare.

"If governors cave, ObamaCare is never going away. ObamaCare's command-and-control regime will reduce families' choices, thwart innovation and chart a path of European-style debt and rationed access to health care," Sasse wrote.

The Obama administration says it has no backup plan in place for losing the lawsuit.

Sasse thinks the lack of a plan might be a cynical political ploy. Perhaps the administration is betting that the prospect of 7 million people losing coverage will make the pressure irresistible to set up state exchanges.

But it's a reckless way to govern.

Think of the thousands of people being treated for cancer. They have enough to worry about without the uncertainty of knowing whether they can afford their chemotherapy.

The effects would shudder through the entire health care system. Insurance companies would have to raise premiums by as much as 47 percent, according to a study by the RAND Corp. An estimated 70 percent of consumers would cancel their policies.

Hospitals would lose revenue. Layoffs would loom. The chaos in the health care system would affect the broader economy.

Sasse is not the only senator to offer a plan to cope with the aftermath of a ruling. Sens. Lamar Alexander, Orrin Hatch and John Barrasso have also promised to offer financial assistance. Since Sasse has been in the Senate for only about two months, it's likely the plan offered by the more experienced senators would be considered the favorite.

In any event, having a backup plan ready if the court rules for the plaintiffs in King v. Burwell would be the responsible thing to do. Sasse has the right idea.

## ABOUT THIS PAGE

The View page provides a forum for open discussion of issues and interests affecting our readers. Initialed editorials represent the opinion of the writer, but not necessarily that of the **PRESS & DAKOTAN**.

Bylined columns represent the view of the author. We welcome letters on current topics. Questions regarding the Views page should be directed to Kelly Hertz at [kelly.hertz@yankton.net](mailto:kelly.hertz@yankton.net).

## IN HISTORY

### By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, March 23, the 82nd day of 2015. There are 283 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On March 23, 1965, America's first two-person space mission took place as Gemini 3 blasted off with astronauts Virgil I. Grisom and John W. Young aboard for a nearly 5-hour flight.

**On this date:** In 1775, Patrick Henry delivered an address to the Virginia Provincial Convention in which he is said to have declared, "Give me liberty, or give me death!"

In 1806, explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, having reached the Pacific coast, began their journey back east.

In 1914, the first installment of "The Perils of Pauline," the legendary silent film serial starring Pearl White, premiered in the greater New York City area.

In 1919, Benito Mussolini founded his Fascist political movement in Milan, Italy.

In 1933, the German Reichstag adopted the Enabling Act, which effectively granted Adolf Hitler dictatorial powers.

In 1940, the radio program "Truth or Consequences," hosted by Ralph Edwards, was first broadcast over four CBS radio stations in New York and New England.

In 1942, the first Japanese-Americans evacuated by the U.S. Army during World War II arrived at the internment camp in Manzanar, California.

In 1956, Pakistan became an Islamic republic.

In 1973, before sentencing a group of Watergate break-in defendants, Chief U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica read aloud a letter he'd received from James W. McCord Jr. which said there had been "political pressure" to "plead guilty and remain silent."

In 1983, President Ronald Reagan first proposed developing technology to intercept incoming enemy missiles — an idea that came to be known as the Strategic Defense Initiative. Dr. Barney Clark, recipient of a Jarvik permanent artificial heart, died at the University of Utah Medical Center after 112 days with the device.

In 1990, the romantic comedy "Pretty Woman," starring Richard Gere and Julia Roberts, was released by Buena Vista Pictures.

In 2011, Academy Award-winning actress Elizabeth Taylor died in Los Angeles at age 79.

**Ten years ago:** A federal appeals court refused to reinstate Terri Schiavo's feeding tube and the Florida Legislature

decided not to intervene in the epic struggle over the brain-damaged woman; Schiavo's parents then filed a request with the U.S. Supreme Court. An explosion at a BP oil refinery in Texas City, Texas, killed 15 people. Truck driver Tyrone Williams was convicted in federal court in Houston for his role in the 2003 deaths of 19 immigrants he was smuggling across Texas. (After initially receiving a life sentence, Williams was resentenced in Jan. 2011 to nearly 34 years in prison.)

**Five years ago:** Claiming a historic triumph, President Barack Obama signed a \$938 billion health care overhaul, declaring "a new season in America." President Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met in an unusual pair of low-profile meetings at the White House amid a serious dispute about settlement construction. The National Football League changed its overtime rules for playoff games.

**One year ago:** During a visit to Beijing, U.S. first lady Michelle Obama told Chinese professors, students and parents that she wouldn't have risen to where she was if her parents hadn't pushed for her to get a good education. Adolfo Suarez, Spain's first democratically elected prime minister after decades of right-wing rule under Gen. Francisco Franco, died in Madrid at age 81.

**Today's Birthdays:** Comedian Marty Allen is 93. Sir Roger Bannister, the runner who broke the 4-minute mile in 1954, is 86. Movie director Mark Rydell is 86. Motorsports Hall of Famer Craig Breedlove is 78. Singer-producer Ric Ocasek is 66. Singer Chaka Khan is 62. Actress Amanda Plummer is 58. Actress Catherine Keener is 56. Actress Hope Davis is 51. Actor Richard Grieco is 50. Country musician Kevin Griffin (Yankee Grey) is 50. Actress Marin Hinkle is 49. Rock singer-musician Damon Albarn (Blur) is 47. Actress-singer Melissa Errico is 45. Rock musician John Humphrey (The Nixons) is 45. Actor Randall Park (Film: "The Interview"; TV: "Fresh Off the Boat") is 41. Actress Michelle Monaghan is 39. Actress Keri Russell is 39. Actress Anastasia Griffith is 37. Gossip columnist-blogger Perez Hilton is 37. Actress Nicholle Tom is 37. Country singer Paul Martin (Marshall Dillon) is 37. Actor Nicolas Wright (TV: "Manhattan Love Story") is 33.

**Thought for Today:** "What some call health, if purchased by perpetual anxiety about diet, isn't much better than tedious disease." — Alexander Pope, English poet (1688-1744).

## FROM THE BIBLE

*It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. Hebrews 12:7.* Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Launcher Question

**Doug Johnson, Yankton**

In 2010, Brian Paulsen became Yankton's police chief. His transition included questions about the Yankton Police Department. Discussion included surplus military property possessed by the department; its records, including the letters of request for the property, the intended use of the property, documentation showing a need for the property and the ATF forms.

For law enforcement, the M-79 grenade launcher is nothing more than a platform to provide "long range" deployment of 40MM chemical and less lethal rounds with a measure of accuracy — the chemical munitions being OC and CS gas while the kinetic energy rounds are

beanbags, rubber balls and batons.

In 2012, Paulsen sent an officer to be trained as an instructor in chemical munitions (gas), less lethal kinetic rounds, their delivery methods and proper storage and safeguarding.

In 2014, Paulsen welcomed the donation of expired, less lethal munitions from the Vermillion Police Department and believed the ammunition would be useful for training the Yankton Police Department Special Response Team (SRT).

But public outcry spawned by recent events put an evil face on law enforcement's attempt to obtain these tools.

Joseph "Jody" Bottum wrote in The Federalist, "Each grenade launcher proclaims that, even in a small town, law enforcement is just a species of war." This is a scary thought when those who declare

this are ignoring law enforcement's effort to avoid having to kill someone in a violent encounter.

On Jan. 4, 2015, the *Rapid City Journal* quotes Paulsen: "Nobody here can tell me why they got that," when discussing the grenade launcher. Did Paulsen ask his staff about the department's acquisition of the grenade launcher, or did he not review the department's records?

Were the comments made by Paulsen a political tactic, a lack of knowledge of department records or an attempt to paint the previous YPD administration as ineffective?

In today's society, accuracy and truthfulness are requirements necessary for transparency for all law enforcement agencies. It is imperative that city government and the city manager insure

that police department management is accurate and truthful in all information disseminated to the public.

*This is a response from Yankton Chief of Police Brian Paulsen:*

*To my knowledge, the grenade launcher in question remained in storage in the basement of the department since I have been the Chief of Police. The YPD's records on the launcher do not adequately indicate the need for its acquisition. I recently made the determination that the launcher was both obsolete and unnecessary for the City of Yankton. It was shipped back to the federal government on Feb. 27, 2015. The YPD has access to and trains with newer and more suitable equipment owned by the Yankton County Sheriff's Office.*



## Capitol Notebook

# A 'Hail Mary': Are Dems A TD Away From Revival?

**BY BOB MERCER**

State Capitol Bureau

**PIERRE** — Why doesn't anyone mention Tom Daschle when they talk about possible Democratic candidates for the U.S. Senate election in 2016?

Daschle, who turned 67 on Dec. 9, is the only Democrat associated with South Dakota's political scene who has the mustard and connections for a vigorous campaign.

He hasn't shown any interest.

The South Dakota Democratic Party is a boat adrift. The retirement of the party's last federal office-holder, U.S. Sen. Tim Johnson, last year left the Democrats without a leader.

Neither former U.S. Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin nor former U.S. Attorney Brendan Johnson (the senator is his father) wants it.

None matched Daschle at his best. Until Republican John Thune did.

Tom Daschle never publicly engaged again in South Dakota after losing the 2004 U.S. Senate election to Thune.

Thune, who served six years in the U.S. House of Representatives starting in 1997, came within an eyelash of defeating Johnson for the Senate in 2002.

Daschle fought hard to keep Johnson. That made Thune's next target Daschle.

The lessons Thune learned about identifying and turning out supporters in 2002 came to be perfected by his campaign in 2004.

Thune received 50.58 percent of the vote, Daschle 49.42 percent. The totals: Thune 197,848; Daschle 193,340.

Daschle had served eight years in the U.S. House, starting in 1979, and won three terms in the Senate, starting in 1987.

He was the Democratic leader of the Senate when Thune beat him.



Bob

**MERCER**

And then Tom Daschle, who had been accused in the 2004 campaign of being too focused on Washington, D.C., essentially disappeared from South Dakota's political scene.

An odd factor in the 2004 race might have been the resignation of former Gov. Bill Janklow from the U.S. House seat.