

# THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861

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## OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

# Minors Don't Need E-Cigarettes

**LINCOLN JOURNAL STAR (Sept. 28):** E-cigarettes may be safer than traditional tobacco ones, but the purpose is the same — getting nicotine into humans.

So if a planned interim study hearing by the Legislature's General Affairs Committee helps lawmakers come to the conclusion that the sale of e-cigarettes to minors should be banned, so be it.

But make no mistake about it, the sale of e-cigarettes to minors should be banned.

There are most certainly regulatory and scientific questions that still need to be answered. And a study and vigorous debate might buy some time while some of those get sorted out.

But we can't afford to take too much time.

A recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study found that 10 percent of high school students had tried e-cigarettes in 2012, up more than double from the 4.7 percent figure of 2011. There was almost a doubling among middle school students during that same time, jumping to 2.7 percent from 1.4 percent.

Because e-cigarettes use battery power to heat a liquid, turning it into vapor rather than smoke, it's not as noxious as traditional cigarette smoke. Nicotine can be added to the liquid, as can any number of kid-friendly flavors.

Despite the health risks, cigarette smoking always has had a certain allure for youth. This possibly healthier and currently unregulated alternative will only pull in more experimenters.

Nicotine is addictive. E-cigarettes aren't as efficient as tobacco cigarettes at getting nicotine into the body, so it's not hard to image e-cigarettes being the entryway to tobacco use when the nicotine e-buzz starts to dull.

In an era when we've acknowledged the high costs to health — and health care — associated with tobacco use, and we've made smoking in most public places against the law, it seems odd to allow minors an unimpeded path to potential tobacco use through e-cigarettes.

E-cigarettes may be an effective way to kick the tobacco smoking habit. If the science bears it out, they may be a better alternative for adult smokers than tobacco smoke in any form.

But inhaling anything with nicotine — smoke or vapor — is less healthy than inhaling nothing but pure air.

Minors don't need access to e-cigarettes. There's plenty of time after they're 18 to pick up adult habits. For now, the state would be wise to act as soon as possible to ban the sale of e-cigarettes to minors.

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## ON THIS DATE

### By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, Oct. 7, the 280th day of 2012. There are 85 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On Oct. 7, 1929, former Interior Secretary Albert B. Fall, one of the main figures of the Teapot Dome scandal, went on trial in Washington, D.C., charged with accepting a bribe from oil tycoon Edward L. Doheny. (Fall was found guilty and sentenced to a year in prison and fined \$100,000; he ended up serving nine months. Ironically, Doheny was acquitted at trial of offering the bribe that Fall was convicted of taking.)

**On this date:** In 1612, Italian poet Giovanni Battista Guarini died in Venice. In 1777, the second Battle of Saratoga began during the American Revolution. (British forces under Gen. John Burgoyne surrendered ten days later.)

In 1849, author Edgar Allan Poe died in Baltimore at age 40.

In 1858, the fifth debate between Illinois senatorial candidates Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas took place in Galesburg.

In 1910, a major wildfire devastated the northern Minnesota towns of Spooner and Baudette, charring at least 300,000 acres. Some 40 people are believed to have died.

In 1949, the Republic of East Germany was formed.

In 1960, Democratic presidential candidate John F. Kennedy and Republican opponent Richard M. Nixon held their second televised debate, in Washington, D.C.

In 1982, the Andrew Lloyd Webber-Tim Rice musical "Cats" opened on Broadway. (The show closed Sept. 10, 2000, after a record 7,485 performances.)

In 1985, Palestinian gunmen hijacked the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro in the Mediterranean. (The hijackers, who killed Jewish American tourist Leon Klinghoffer, surrendered two days after taking over the ship.)

In 1991, University of Oklahoma law professor Anita Hill publicly accused Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas of making sexually inappropriate comments when she worked for him; Thomas denied Hill's allegations.

In 1992, trade representatives of the United States, Canada and Mexico initiated the North American Free Trade Agreement during a ceremony in San Antonio, Texas.

In 2001, the current war in Afghanistan started as the United States and Britain launched air attacks against military targets and Osama bin Laden's training camps in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks.

**Ten years ago:** California voters recalled Gov. Gray Davis and elected Arnold Schwarzenegger their new governor. Turkey's parliament voted overwhelmingly to allow Turkish troops to be sent to Iraq. Ten Southeast Asian nations signed an accord establishing a Europe-like economic community by 2020. American scientists Alexei Abrikosov and Anthony Leggett and Russian Vitaly Ginzburg won the Nobel Prize in physics for their work in how matter can behave at extremely low temperatures.

**Five years ago:** The misery worsened on Wall Street, as the Dow lost more than 500 points and all the major indexes slid more than 5 percent. In their second presidential debate, held at Belmont University in Nashville, Democrat Barack Obama and Republican John McCain clashed repeatedly over the causes and cures for the economic crisis. Makoto Kobayashi and Toshihide Maskawa of Japan and Yoichiro Nambu of the United States won the Nobel Prize in physics.

**One year ago:** Venezuela's National Electoral Council announced that President Hugo Chavez had won re-election for the third time. (Chavez died in March 2013 at age 58 after a two-year battle with cancer.)

**Today's Birthdays:** Retired South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu is 82. Comedian Joy Behar (TV: ex-"The View") is 71. Former National Security Council aide Lt. Col. Oliver North (ret.) is 70. Rock musician Kevin Godley (10cc) is 68. Actress Jill Larson is 66. Country singer Kieran Kane is 64. Singer John Mellencamp is 62. Rock musician Ricky Phillips is 62. Actress Mary Badham (Film: "To Kill a Mockingbird") is 61. Actress Christopher Norris is 60. Rock musician Tico Torres (Bon Jovi) is 60. Cellist Yo-Yo Ma is 58. Gospel singer Michael W. Smith is 56. Actor Dylan Baker is 55. Recording executive and TV personality Simon Cowell (TV: "The X Factor") is 54. Rock musician Charlie Marinkovich (Iron Butterfly) is 54. Country singer Dale Watson is 51. Pop singer Ann Curless (Ex-pose) is 50. Rhythm-and-blues singer Toni Braxton is 46. Rock singer-musician Thom Yorke (Radiohead) is 45. Rock musician-dancer Leeroy Thornhill is 44. Actress Nicole Ari Parker is 43. Actress Allison Munn is 39. Rock singer-musician Damian Kulash is 38. Singer Taylor Hicks ("American Idol") is 37. Actor Omar Benson Miller is 35. Electronic musician Flying Lotus (AKA Stephen Ellison) is 30. MLB player Evan Longoria is 28. Actress Amber Stevens is 27.

**Thought for Today:** "If a man happens to find himself, he has a mansion which he can inhabit with dignity all the days of his life." — James Michener, American author (1907-1997).

## FROM THE BIBLE

*Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side. Mark 6:45. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis*



# Trusting The Folks

BY BILL O'REILLY

Creators Syndicate

Amid all the madness over Obamacare and the government shutdown comes a fascinating poll about "we the people." For years, the Gallup organization has asked the following question: Do you trust the American people to make good judgments about political issues?

Eight years ago, 78 percent of those polled said they had trust in the folks. This year that number plummeted to just 61 percent.

The reason is President Obama. There is now a lot of buyer's remorse about his reelection. All of the polls show his job approval rating is below 50 percent and falling fast, with the Syrian debacle and the Obamacare chaos adding to the general dismay about the soft economy.

The key disenchantment with the economy is that the median salary for American workers has dropped on Obama's watch. After five years, paychecks continue to stagnate. Also, tax revenue is at a historic high. Doing the math, workers are paying more to the government and taking home less in their checks.

Not good.

And it is the fault of the American people that our politicians continue to let us down. Let's be honest: Many of us simply don't pay attention to our country. We are too caught up in our own situations to be bothered with public policy. And it never has been easier to escape reality. High-tech gizmos give individuals the power to create their own isolated worlds. Millions of Americans now spend the majority of their leisure time texting, tweeting, gaming, porning, emailing and surfing the Internet.

We are Facebooking, googling, blogging, flaming, spamming and downloading. We are



Bill O'REILLY

becoming a nation of cyberspace zombies, addicted to machines that shut out real life. H.G. Wells said it would happen, and it has.

Talk-radio hosts call them "low information voters": Americans who don't know much about history, current events or anything else and who often vote on pure emotion. If they like somebody, he or she gets the chad. And Barack Obama is a very likeable guy.

We live in a complicated, dangerous age. Democrats have seized on the economic collapse and a bad war (Iraq) that happened on President George W. Bush's watch. They have convinced the majority of voters to embrace a new America — one that gives the federal government extraordinary power, one that runs up a record amount of debt in pursuit of social justice and "income equality."

Well, it simply is not working out. The gap between rich and poor under Obama is getting bigger because fewer well-paying jobs are available. Corporations are being taxed to the hilt and are loath to add more workers. Thus, salaries fall because there are more than enough applicants to fill any job vacancy.

As the Gallup poll suggests, we are beginning to blame each other for the confusing state of this country. And, indeed, it is collectively our fault. We should be electing problem solvers, not charismatic ideologues who can whip people into a frenzy.

But in order to make the Internet cut, you have to make a flamboyant play to a specific crowd.

Not a smart crowd, a specific crowd.

*Veteran TV news anchor Bill O'Reilly is host of the Fox News show "The O'Reilly Factor" and author of many books, including the newly released "Killing Jesus."*

## Capitol Notebook

# A Look At Law That Protects Market On Obamacare Policies

BY BOB MERCER

State Capitol Bureau

**PIERRE** — On day two of the federal shutdown, which also was day two of registration for health insurance subsidies under the federal Affordable Care Act, former governor and current U.S. Senate contender Mike Rounds issued a statement calling for dismantling Obamacare.

That would seem to be a sure move by a Republican candidate in South Dakota. But it drew attention to an intersection between the Rounds campaign and his insurance business.

During the Legislature's 2013 session, Rounds' two main campaign advisers — both former top aides from his time as governor — lobbied for a new state law.

The law requires that Obamacare policies can be provided only through South Dakota insurance producers. It also requires that normal commissions must be paid.

The law gives insurance business people in South Dakota further reason to support one of their own.

Rounds is president and treasurer of Fischer Rounds and Associates, an insurance and real estate company with offices in Pierre, Watertown, Mitchell, Rapid City and Sioux Falls.

Through two aides, Rounds had direct connection to the law's passage.

One of them, Rob Skjonsberg, was his right-hand man during the 2002 campaign for governor and served five years as Gov. Rounds' chief of staff.

Skjonsberg returned a year ago to briefly work for Fischer Rounds. Then he went to work for the Senate campaign as manager, technically through the GSG Strategies firm.

Rounds' campaign pays GSG \$7,750 monthly for services.

The campaign also pays GSG each month \$1,625 for rent and \$695 for utilities. Those are for a Capitol Avenue building purchased by

Fischer Rounds last year in a buy-out of another Pierre real estate firm.

Meanwhile the Independent Insurance Agents of South Dakota, who sought the state law, were the only client for whom Skjonsberg registered as a legislative lobbyist in the 2013 session.

GSG was organized Sept. 20, 2012, by Skjonsberg and two other Pierre men who worked closely together in politics for two decades.

Former Sen. Bob Gray of Pierre is a past chairman of the South Dakota Republican Party. Jason Glodt is a former gubernatorial aide for Rounds and is listed as GSG's manager. Glodt was GSG's other lobbyist on the insurance legislation.

Glodt and Gray worked for then-Attorney General Mark Barnett when he lost to Rounds in the 2002 Republican primary for governor. They also worked together on many legislative campaigns.

Skjonsberg said Friday that Mike Rounds is GSG's anchor client.

"We'll never take on clients or contracts unless we believe in their cause and they're able to co-exist with our existing client list," Skjonsberg said.

Election arithmetic favors Rounds' nomination. The top finisher needs 35 percent to win the primary. He is competing against three lesser-known and lesser-funded candidates who split the Anybody But Mike vote.

State Sen. Larry Rhoden of Union Center, state Rep. Stacey Nelson of Fulton and Dr. Annette Bosworth of Sioux Falls are going great distances to drive their stakes deep among the most conservative of Republican primary voters.

Rounds' Obamacare statement puts him with those opposing it. The insurance protection law? Rhoden and Nelson helped co-sponsor it and voted for it.

## YOUR LETTERS

### Appreciative Lions

#### Yankton Lions Club

The Yankton Lion's Club would like to extend a sincere thank you to the below listed businesses and individuals who contributed and or sponsored financially the 2013 Lion's Golf Outing. We also thank the 56 participants in this year's outing. It was a blow out success. The funds from this outing will be used to help the Yankton Center and the Wounded Warrior Project.

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