

Price too high for panel to fail budget-cutting jobs

It's the latest scare: the "poison pill" in the law creating the Joint Committee on Deficit Reduction, better known as the "supercommittee," this fall.

The committee is supposed to come to an agreement cutting \$1.2 trillion from the budget, or automatic cuts totaling the same amount will be taken from all federal programs across the board. And that is going to hurt — a lot.

No one envisioned that the committee would deadlock so tightly that it could not come up with a plan. The across-the-board cuts would be painful for both parties, especially with a possible \$600 billion cut at the Pentagon.

Even measures designed to mitigate the recession and continuing high unemployment would be slashed, including unemployment benefits and aid to states.

The deadlock probably means some sleepless nights for the supercommittee, which includes six senators and six representatives, three of each from each of the two major parties.

The panel has only a week, until next Wednesday, to come up with a bill. Then Congress has until Dec. 23 to pass it without changes — or reject it. If that does not happen, the "poison pill" clause goes into effect, slashing all budgets for 2013.

A poison pill is a provision inserted into a law or, say, a corporate charter that's so bitter, it's assumed no one will swallow it. Corporations use poison pills to prevent hostile takeovers, but this one is designed to force two parties to compromise.

It may yet work. Washington is a place where last-

minute reprieves do exist.

But if it doesn't, a lot of lawmakers are going to be sorry they voted for this law.

The supercommittee itself has been deadlocked over party-line issues: Republican opposition to any tax increase, and Democrats' insistence that "new revenue" must be included in any budget solution. Republicans also want to cut or curb "entitlements" like Medicaid and Social Security, while the Democrats want to tax "the rich."

That's the split that prompted Congress to invent the supercommittee to start with. There's been no shift so far by either party. Nor is there any sign of one — yet.

Compromise is required here. The Republicans may need to agree to some "revenue enhancements," and the Democrats will have to come around on retaining some of the popular Bush-era tax cuts. Unless both sides give a little, nothing can happen.

And we're pretty sure, people want something to happen. Like most of Europe, the U.S. needs to learn to live within its means, and needs to start before a worldwide panic sets in, not after.

That means the supercommittee — and the Congress — need to come to an agreement by next Wednesday. If they don't, the price the members pay could be severe, come November 2012.

The rest of us face all manner of problems, from a likely new recession to higher prices and higher interest rates. It's that important.

It's time for something to give in Washington. — Steve Haynes



No time to go through congress

—Letters to the Editor—

To the Editor:
President Obama has been stomping across America saying he doesn't have time to go through congress and is going to pass his job bill through Executive Power.

The fact is the newly elected Republicans have been working hard and have passed 17 bills in the House of Representatives that would help create jobs now.

Harry Reid makes sure they are dead on arrival and the Senate democrats won't even consider them.

President Obama also said if

he isn't elected president in 2012, you are on your own - that sounds good to me.

That's what the Tea Party is all about. A grass roots movement. Americans like you and me that don't like the direction our country is going.

We must aggressively fight for free markets, shrink the government, roll back the large number of regulations that have paralyzed the job creators, utilize our own natural resources for energy, cre-

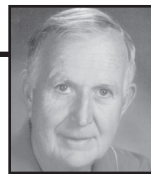
ate jobs for Americans not other countries, stop the insane spending.

At a Tea Party protest, you see a wave of American flags. Patriot Americans that want to take back our country the democratic way by voting in conservatives that love America and believe in our constitution.

Pray for our country,
Marilyn Frisbie
McDonald

Legislative News

By
Ward
Cassidy



120th State Representative

In my last article, I mentioned that there would be changes coming to the Kansas Medicaid program. This past Wednesday, Governor Brownback announced his plan to help our state work with the increased costs of this program.

What is Medicaid? It is a 46-year-old care program for the very poor, elderly, and disabled. It is jointly funded by the federal and state governments, but managed by the states. In 2011, Medicaid served over 65 million Americans.

Medicaid is the largest source of health care for children. It also serves close to 9 million non-elderly people with disabilities, among them 4 million children with mental illness. There are also 8 million low-income seniors (who also qualify for Medicare) included. Also covered are low-income pregnant women through

the duration of their pregnancy.

The controversial Affordable Care Act (Obama Care)—which the Kansas Legislature passed a resolution last session to join other states in protesting) calls for the federal government to pick up all medical costs for newly eligible Medicaid enrollees for three years, beginning in 2014. Kansas will be required to pay for a share of the costs after that, topping out at 10 percent by 2020. We will also be required to pay for the "matching rate," which ranges from 20- to 50-percent of medical costs.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2014, all uninsured Americans with incomes up to 133 percent of federal poverty guidelines will qualify for Medicaid. Using the law's required method to calculate income, a family of four who have an income of \$30,800 or less will qualify.

Because our economy is strugg-

ling, it will only add more people to the Medicaid roles. This will hurt our state budget even more. As it is, Medicaid has grown at an average of seven percent a year for the last 10 years.

I have been to meetings the past few weeks on immigration, school funding, the problems of electrical power in Kansas, overcrowded prisons, and Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERS). I will keep our area up-to-date on these critical issues as I learn more.

I appreciate all the positive comments people have given me about my efforts to represent Northwest Kansas and working to keep people informed. Send e-mails to ward.cassidy@house.ks.gov.

Casey's Comments

By
Casey
McCormick



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It seems I write more and more about individuals who have left us. I guess that is because they shouldn't be forgotten.

Gerold Lee was only 56 when his time came last week.

I showed up in these parts as a single parent, trying to figure out whether or not my son and I would fit in. Gerold was one of the first people I met.

Back in 2001, he and his wife owned the Two Lee's Steakhouse in McDonald. Although it sounded like a Chinese restaurant, the place served up some pretty good beef and seafood. They gave me a helping hand as a part-time cook. The job gave me a chance to get to know the Lees and other locals and they got a chance to know my son and me.

Much has changed since then.

My son and I found a new family and many more new friends over the years.

Gerold's life seemed to be filled with more downs than ups over that same time. He had his share of demons and sins, just like you and me.

But the man had a heart of gold, was loved by many others and my life was certainly better having met him.

GOD SAYS

For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

Psalms 37:10, 11

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High stamp price set for long ride

To the Editor:
Social Security or Stealing Savings?

A local (only) stamp should be cheaper! What is cost of hauling mail off (to Wichita), for jobs there and hauling it back? Then closing small post offices, devastating rural people!

T'would be more efficient to build a refinery there, for Alaska, Canada and North Dakota oil,

than pipe the profit to Texas.

In all of Social Security — whose money was ever saved for, and returned too — plus interest? If anybody but Congress had foisted this pyramid, Ponzi, chain letter scheme on the people of U.S.A., they would be punished for fraud. Abolish retirement (\$) for every elected official; if budget is not balanced, dock their pay, by the same percent!

"Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the way, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your soul. — Jeremiah 6:16.

Frank Sowers
Benkelman, Neb.

PS: Where doth the Constitution permit taxing everybody to benefit anyone?

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