

Opinion: Sanctuary state bad idea for Calif.

By Ted Gaines

In its continued quest to lead the nation in irresponsible governance, the California Senate is moving forward with Senate Bill 54. The bill completely dismisses the millions of citizens who follow the law and want safe communities for their families and businesses. It's also the latest embarrassing example of the Legislature's cult-like devotion to ignoring the fundamental responsibilities of government while obsessing over issues allowing for maximum moral grandstanding.



Ted Gaines

SB54 effectively would turn California into a “sanctuary state,” making it harder for state and local officials to turn over violent, illegal alien criminals to federal officials for deportation. California would be the safest haven for these felons and predators and would instantly become a magnet for every illegal alien criminal in the country.

We don't need more. Even ardent supporters of the bill acknowledge that if SB54 is passed and signed into law up to 20,000 violent criminals will be shielded in Los Angeles and Orange counties alone.

Recently ICE conducted a standard immigration sweep in

Southern California that resulted in more than 160 people being taken into custody. About 120 of those detainees had been previously convicted of serious, violent crimes such as robbery, assault and sex offenses. California shouldn't allow illegal alien rapists, murderers and gang-bangers to be sent back to your neighborhood, mine or anyone's neighborhood to commit more crimes, but they are all but guaranteeing a new set of victims by making us a sanctuary state.

SB54's author said during a hearing on the bill, "Any individual, irrespective of who they are and where they come from, who commits a heinous crime, we don't want them in our neighborhoods, don't want them in our communities, don't want them in our state, we don't want them in our nation. Period."

Then, with no sense of irony, he presented a bill to protect them from deportation.

Meanwhile, the 200,000 people fleeing a potential mega-flood in Oroville are probably scratching their heads wondering why the state government is working on harboring illegal alien criminals, mandating background checks for ammunition purchases, pumping out laws and rules about a microscopic universe of transgendered, or wearing out their throats screaming about President Trump, when the state is falling apart?

Oroville threatens unimaginable damage. We haven't built major state water storage since the late 1970s even though our population has roughly doubled since that time. That's malfeasance.

Our roads are a crumbling mess. We pay some of the highest gas taxes for potholed streets that feel like they're paved with cobblestones and cramped highways that stretch commutes and keep us from moving goods around the state.

Our schools continue to be some of the nation's worst even though K-12 education spending is checking in at more than \$70

billion this year, up around \$25 billion since just 2011. Is this what taxpayers should expect for that massive investment?

With our dams threatening disaster, roads falling apart and schools failing our children, would your first thought as a politician be: "Quick, let's ban plastic grocery bags!"?

Californians are getting the worst possible civic deal. They've got a government that is diving down the Progressive rabbit hole, reaching into every aspect of their lives and charging them an arm and a leg to do it. At the same time, government is neglecting the very basic infrastructure that every citizen depends on. With public safety, they are fighting to actually make it worse.

The once-golden state is falling apart because government is ignoring the issues of the many for the issues of the few. To help all its citizens, California must repair and expand the state's physical capital. It's time to get building.

Ted Gaines represents the 1st Senate District, which includes all or parts of Alpine, El Dorado, Lassen, Modoc, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, Shasta, Sierra and Siskiyou counties.

Letter: Chamber reiterates its South Shore vision

To the community,

Tahoe Chamber would like to thank Councilmembers Tom Davis and Austin Sass, and the council for the invitation to attend the City Council Feb. 14 special meeting and for the opportunity

to present the business community's priorities to the city as they prepare for their strategic planning retreat.

Several years ago, the Tahoe Chamber and its members established a vision and a set of priorities for the South Shore community titled Tahoe Future 2020. The vision statement from that document reads:

"In 2020 the South Shore of Lake Tahoe will be a vibrant community with a diversified and robust economy and a built environment that complements the natural environment. Our focus and investments in community, economy and environment balance one another to create an incredible sense of place where people desire to visit, recreate, live, work and invest."

To the Tahoe Chamber, this vision statement is as true today as when it was first written.

The Tahoe Future 2020 states five core principles in order to achieve the vision. The core principles are economic vitality, intellectual capital, infrastructure, sustainability and quality of life. At the Feb. 14 special meeting, the Tahoe Chamber introduced these five core principals and highlighted two critical priorities for the city to focus on in 2017 and beyond.

First is infrastructure, which is essential to the success of businesses on the South Shore. Infrastructure is the means by which our members deliver their goods and services, as well as how customers access their businesses. Over the past month, we have seen the limitations of our local infrastructure and have directly watched portions of it fall apart. When we say infrastructure we mean more than roads, although roads are the most obvious weakness with potholes growing by the day. Infrastructure includes drainage systems, flood control, trails, sidewalks, recreation facilities and snow removal. It's the hard infrastructure and the equipment, staff and

other resources necessary to operate and maintain the capital investments. As we all know, financial resources are at the heart of every infrastructure discussion and are a significant challenge for the South Shore.

With that being said, it is imperative that the city develops, communicates and implements a comprehensive and transparent infrastructure financing plan. We believe the foundation of the plan should be identifying the financial resources necessary to construct, operate and maintain critical infrastructure including roads, sidewalks, trails, snow removal, facilities and parks over the long term. Furthermore, the plan should clearly articulate how existing revenues are used and what shortfalls exist. From there, the city should work collaboratively with the business community, property owners, and others to identify a comprehensive solution to fill shortfalls.

The one-off financing approach of the past two decades is not sustainable and makes the planning process for businesses nearly impossible because each year there seems to be a new uncoordinated request for additional taxes or fees.

Second is economic vitality, specifically creating an atmosphere which encourages existing businesses to invest, grow and attract new business and capital to our community. In order for this to happen the city needs to continue to make strategic and policy decisions that provide fair, timely and predictable outcomes. Only when decisions, policy, and interpretations of the general plan and code are fair, timely and predictable are businesses comfortable with taking a risk and making investments. The willingness of our Members to invest in the South Shore is based in large part on the ability of the city to perform this function. For more information about the Tahoe Future vision, go **online**.

Jason Drew, chair Tahoe Chamber board of directors

Opinion: Despite water bonds Oroville still happens

By Aubrey Bettencourt, Modesto Bee

After six years of drought and a few months of flooding, California's decades-long political commitment to ideology of being either for the environment or against progress has endangered the state's water supply system and is threatening public safety, environmental health and economic stability.

Rather than upgrade California's water collection and delivery systems, for 50 years state bureaucrats, political appointees and many elected officials focused their priorities on an onslaught of environmental standards, regulations, projects and programs committed to their rose-colored-glasses vision of California.

They created a false choice for all elected officials, every "wanna-be" officeholder, career bureaucrat, water manager, scientist and engineer, advocacy group, community leader, and even California voters: either you are for the environment or you are against California.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Trump's health policy is worrisome

By Anne Foster

One of the priorities mentioned during Donald Trump's election campaign, public health, is thus far missing from the top issues category of his government's new website.

Experts are stressing the importance of governmental support for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and its work with international institutions, to prevent the spread of illness in the United States. The CDC plays an important role in public health, detecting and responding to STDs and infectious diseases such as Ebola, fighting the proliferation of highly antibiotic-resistant bacteria, and working to lower chronic health issues such as obesity and heart disease. The agency is also in charge of battling serious issues caused by substance abuse, especially prescription drug abuse, in an attempt to reduce the high rate of drug overdoses in the U.S.

Tom Frieden, former director of the CDC, recently told the press that the CDC lacks the funding or power to deal with imminent threats, with due rapidity, and that the establishment of an emergency fund for emergencies, is key. Legal authority to act quickly is also important, if serious threats such as Zika and Ebola, which know no borders, are to be addressed as and when they arise, so they can be nipped in the bud.

Frieden also noted that a repeal of the Affordable Care Act would place the Prevention and Public Health Fund, which takes up over 10 percent of the agency's budget at risk. The Prevention and Public Health Fund has supported immunization programs, which could be eliminated if funding was no longer available.

Frieden recently handed over the reins of the CDC to Anne Schuchat, who was principal deputy director during his reign. It is not clear how long she will continue to hold the post since she is currently acting head. What is clear is that whoever commands the CDC in the long term, will have to make education and training a priority, so the agency can glean the most pressing issues both on a national and worldwide scale.

According to Frieden, keen diplomacy skills are also key if trust is to be built between countries. Most countries, he noted, would be reticent to admit they were facing the problem of superbugs, as bad press could result in a big drop in tourist figures. Therefore, great diplomacy would be needed in dealing with these countries.

The new CDC director will also need to stress the importance of funding global health initiatives. It is a myth to think that problems such as Ebola can be solved by closing borders. Rather, other countries are unlikely to share knowledge about the health threats they are facing, unless a relationship of trust is established. The United States needs to be financially involved if it is to help these countries detect and quell serious health threats. Providing funds for research is also important. For instance, the link between Zika and microcephaly in babies has been discovered, yet there is much that is still to be learned about the long-term effects of this virus.

The administration will also need to develop plans for tackling HIV/AIDS. The CDC notes that around 1.2 million Americans are currently battling HIV. Thus far, President Trump's platform on health care has not mentioned the issue. Vice President Mike Pence, meanwhile, was at the center of the largest HIV outbreak when he was governor of Indiana. The outbreak, which occurred in 2015, saw Pence initially refuse to lift the state's prohibition of needle exchange programs, which have been shown to significantly reduce the risk of spreading HIV. Pence has voiced his opposition to needle

exchanges forming part of an anti-drug policy. During the outbreak, he did allow some of these programs to operate in Indiana, but some many argue that the response should have been quicker and more extensive.

Trump's choice for secretary of Health and Human Services, meanwhile, Tom Price, opposes the expansion of Medicaid, which aids many of those battling HIV and AIDS. As Global Health Access Project activist, Matt Kavanaugh states, "One of the most important things that happened with Medicaid expansion is that people were able to move off of ADAP and not just get HIV drugs but full [health] insurance."

The Trump government's health policy is still to be formulated, though it is hoped that it will uphold rather than destroy the national health safety net, and take a global view of major health concerns.

Anne Foster is a freelance writer and mother. Prior to parenthood she worked in the healthcare industry and now tries to combine her two passions for a more flexible lifestyle.

Editorial: Attack on press is assault on public

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Feb. 25, 2017, Sacramento Bee.*

President Donald Trump ramped up his war on the media Friday, as his press secretary barred selected reporters from a question-and-answer session in the White House.

The press is right to be outraged. The public should be, too.

Reporters who cover the White House – a public building – are the eyes and ears of the public, and ask questions on issues that Americans care about. Sure, much important reporting on the new presidency is happening in communities across the country. But access to Trump’s official spokespeople is important. That access cannot be based on whether the Republican president believes the coverage is positive.

Read the whole story

Letter: Teachers organization supports transgenders

To the community,

California’s educators believe all students deserve to feel safe and supported in their neighborhood public school.

This is why the Trump administration’s first education action, to reverse protections for transgender students by rescinding the Title IX guidance, is disheartening. To take back basic rights of transgender students at public schools nationwide sends a clear message: This administration does not care about all students.

At CTA, we do. We have led the way in providing safe learning environments for transgender and all students, and we are not about to stop now.

The 2013 legislation signed into law by Gov. Jerry Brown provided transgender students access to the restrooms and locker rooms that are consistent with their chosen gender identity. This is still the law in California, and we will

make sure our students know that.

To send a message against the divisive new federal actions by Trump, CTA is inviting Californians to sign our online pledge to protect all students and make schools a safe haven from bullying and discrimination. The pledge and other social justice resources are **online**. This pledge declares, among other urgent goals, that public education must ensure that all students can succeed, regardless of their gender or gender identity, their immigration status, their ZIP code, the color of their skin, their religion, or who they love.

When our students are free to reach their full potential, our communities are as well.

Eric Heins, California Teachers Association president

Letter: PT group helps at Bread & Broth

To the community,

Helping to feed those in need, Mind Body Physical Therapy hosted Bread & Broth's Monday meal on Feb. 16. It's really wonderful that these folks not only help others feel better in their work lives, but also donate their personal time and funds to provide healthy meals and compassion to food insecure members of the South Tahoe community.

Mind Body Physical Therapy owner Christina Frohlich shared her thoughts about hosting her second Adopt a Day of Nourishment in the past two years. "B&B runs a tight ship! Very clean and organized. The food was fantastic, especially the cauliflower!

Lovely staff, very friendly and caring.”

Joining Frohlich were her fellow Mind Body teammates Jessica Jones and Kiley Lathrop. These three ladies were a big help in assisting the B&B volunteers with packing food giveaway bags, serving and cleanup.

B&B always enjoys having return Adopt A Day sponsors because we know how much they enjoy the experience of selflessly giving to others and personally experiencing how their providing a wonderful dinner and food to take home impacts those in need. B&B would like to thank Mind Body Physical Therapy and the three wonderful crew members for their thoughtful and sincere efforts to improve the lives of other.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Opinion: South Lake Tahoe's elusive vision

By Garry Bowen

As someone who attended the entire South Lake Tahoe City Council Valentine's Day devoted to a strategic priorities planning session, the organized list of invited presenters did indeed make the most of the items that are piling up, blocking potential progress toward a vision City Manager Nancy Kerry has correctly moved toward in both creating and edifying the myriad needs that were presented by some passionate and poignant presenters



Garry Bowen

The quote “There are no rules of architectures for a castle in the clouds” from Lord Gilbert Chesterton correctly implies a reason finding a South Tahoe vision has been so difficult – most of the tenure of its cityhood has been geared to following the major founding businesses, in this case Harveys and Harrah’s (In order of beginning, as the other two majors have changed concepts several times in the same period; the fifth, an outlier, Lakeside Inn, was envisioned and originally built by Harvey Gross as Harvey’s Inn.)

The city across the line has been in an infill mode ever since, as the shift in corporate attention also shifted the visitor-base toward themselves and away from its incorporated California business community. The Waystation included a restaurant, dining room and bar in the building now occupied by Deb Howard, pizza, and chicken wings, as part of a time share all the way to the beach, now Tahoe Beach & Ski; the Tahoe Beach Retreat replaces both the Connolly (nee Koenig) pier and the Timber Cove Lodge, itself a replacement venture for Bob Maloff after the successful cash cow of the 600-unit Tahoe Inn.

The point for now is the same infrastructure remains, but we are now at a bare bones level as to what to do next, and have been in that position way too long as up and down revenue streams have barely kept up with the city’s maintenance, let alone allow for the establishment of significant new ideas, concepts or direction, hence the strategic priorities.

After most of the presenters invited by members of the City

Council were gone, they were followed by department heads, who, aside from the time spent extolling the worthiness of their staff, saw the biggest ideas as those requiring many capital improvements –the ongoing rec center, the possible Regan Beach – but we now don't have to worry about remodeling City Hall, as they chose to do that already.

A surprising very important issue came up: the dilapidated communications system of police, fire and emergency contacts, as they cannot readily contact each other; not-so-surprising was the attempt at moving South Lake Tahoe closer to the top item in David Jinkens survey quite a few years ago now: a safe and secure move in making the community green: 100 percent renewable energy, suggesting a revival of the ill-fated Sustainability Commission, etc.

What this writer tried to bring forth was the idea that most of the other requests/suggestions can easily be under the umbrella of sustainability, in actually moving the city in two ways: (1) toward the green community long desired, and (2) automatically easing the city beyond their only stance of "fiscal" sustainability, as both economy and ecology can now be combined: sustainability as practiced in many places is found to be a "solution-multiplier" in that safe purchases made are of a quality that slows down the need to repurchase as much or as often.

This is a concept known as found money is used in large metropolis'; Kerry is becoming adept at this aspect, but it needs to be expanded to an overall green-level, both to satisfy the constituencies, and a personal mantra: "policies equal to the scenery."

This also would steer clear of what is known as "the picture-postcard mentality" (a term coined by a PhD with the Forest Service), as people attracted here quite often include as a key reason "wanting to get away from either (1) the rat race, or (2) the concrete jungle, but don't often bring

environmental sensitivity with their move.

This is an unfortunate offshoot of a culture that emphasizes jobs (money) first over their surroundings.

In recent Tahoe times, we had a council candidate who downplayed "green" as an additional cost to all the known permitting issues, and a city manager who tried to gloss over the Mo's'/Whole Foods/ Conservancy kerfuffle (another column's term) with a comment: "It can still move ahead, but without as many environmental improvements" – this is indeed unfortunate from both viewpoints, as there are a number of projects that wildly exceed green expectations; in the alternative, there are still many design firms (architectural, engineering, interior, landscape, etc.) that do not fully comprehend the import of designing with (not against) nature.

Tahoe can become the beacon the agencies aspire and quite often claim to be with a mere upgrade in both information and attitude. We are too worried about a potential client's pocketbook when they mostly only want to know what it's going to cost. That's all.

Kerry is to be commended for organizing the strategic priority planning day, and, by the same token, the perseverance of keeping the obscure vision (remember there were three distinct efforts a while back), and her use of a Warren Bennis quote (the first one below) can actually be combined with two others:

"Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality. ... The manager accepts the status quo; the leader challenges it. ... There are two ways of being creative: One can sing and dance: Or one can create an environment in which singers and dancers flourish."– Tahoe is moving closer to realizing all three.

In the context of Tahoe's future, a Chesterton quote as a title I chose, it seems to me (in hindsight of a half century,

if not longer) that Tahoe is a place where many wanted to realize a dream of their own.

With a now more certain sense of pragmatic realities: snow, no snow, forests both sick and healthy, soil not as productive in protecting either; waterways either parched or flooded, all directions point to Green (note no more quotation marks), in getting sufficient value received with enough equity to help all those worthy presentations translate theirs – all of them were, after all, to be of benefit to the community – for example, there is already a Ski Run BID with which Chris McNamara can work – others can become.

I'll close with Peter Senge, a mentor of mine: "We often spend so much time coping with problems along our path that we forget why we are on that path in the first place. The result is that we only have only a dim, or even inaccurate, view of what's really important" (to our future).

Perhaps why we have been missing a vision? So now one can indeed be realized?

Garry Bowen has more than a 50-year connection to the South Shore, with an immediate past devoted to global sustainability, on most of its current fronts: green building, energy and water efficiencies, and public health.

Opinion: Calif.'s job to make America great again

By Joe Mathews

California is on the defensive in its battle with Donald

Trump.

We need offense—now.

Trump is attacking our state as if it were just another political opponent. His strategy is not merely to push California; he wants to rob our state of its political legitimacy.



Joe Mathews

So the president of the United States has falsely claimed that California's elections are fraudulent exercises involving millions of illegal votes. He's frequently accused our biggest cities of endangering our country by failing to assist with immigration enforcement. He has called California "out of control" and threatened to "defund" state programs.

Such attacks are so potentially damaging (since California is the world's sixth-largest economy and a vital model of diverse peoples prospering together) that we need to be fighting Trump much more directly.

Put simply, California must delegitimize Trump before he delegitimizes us.

There are two ways California must go on offense. First, comes the fist: Californians should aggressively question Trump's legitimacy as president. Second, comes the outstretched hand: we must bolster our state's own legitimacy by reaching out to the rest of America and reaffirming how proud we are to be a part of this country.

Any outrageous allegation Trump makes against us should be answered with greater outrage. If Trump wants to make up claims of fraud in our elections, we should target his own frauds—from questionable business dealings to the confidence game of Trump University. When Trump threatens the funds for state programs, Californians should point out that Trump's budget and tax plans could bankrupt the whole country.

When Trump alleges that California is "out of control," California should press the president on those who control him. Why bother negotiating immigration or energy policy with you, Mr. President, when we can go to the Kremlin or Goldman Sachs, and talk with those who oversee you?

The most powerful line of attack against this president is to question his loyalty to the country. Trump has billed himself as an unapologetic nationalist, vowing to make America great again. But he's deeply vulnerable on nationalist grounds. He constantly slanders the country—lying about the murder rate, equating America's leaders with the murderous autocrat Vladimir Putin, tweeting false insults against important American companies and businesses. Californians must convince our fellow citizens that Trump's attacks on this most American of states are an attack against our entire country.

To emphasize Trump's lack of patriotism, we Californians need to put our American patriotism on full throttle. While Trump denigrates America on Twitter, California leaders should be meeting with counterparts across the country, looking for areas of cooperation. When another state faces emergency, California should be the first to send help. And whenever another state celebrates a great triumph, our leaders should congratulate them in person.

Our message: We believe Trump is illegitimate, but we respect Republicans, including Trump voters. To make this sell, Californians should deploy the words of California's "great communicator"—Ronald Reagan—as weapons against the current

president.

The Gipper left us bon mots for nearly every occasion.

To explain our fight with Trump: "When you can't make them see the light, make them feel the heat."

When we engage in protests: "No arsenal, or no weapon in the arsenals of the world, is so formidable as the will and moral courage of free men and women."

As we counter Trump's war against immigrants: "I, in my own mind, have always thought of America as a place in the divine scheme of things that was set aside as a promised land... any person with the courage, with the desire to tear up their roots, to strive for freedom, to attempt and dare to live in a strange and foreign place, to travel halfway across the world was welcome here."

In that vein, California should shift its energies from opposing Trump's Wall—that's defense—and go on offense by demanding the removal of the California-Mexico border's existing wall, an ineffective eyesore that inconveniences tourists, businesses and those who live in the San Diego-Tijuana region.

Opposing the wall should be part of a California effort to develop our own foreign policy with allies Trump is offending. Governor Brown should convene summits with the leaders of Mexico, Canada, Australia and Germany, and sign environmental, trade and tourism agreements with them. Then Brown should ask: Why doesn't the president make deals like that?

Sun Tzu advised, "If your opponent is of choleric temper, seek to irritate him." This offensive strategy—reaching out to Americans while attacking Trump's legitimacy—would irritate and isolate him. That's the best way to weaken Trump—and protect our state and our country.

Joe Mathews writes the Connecting California column for Zócalo Public Square.

Opinion: How Medicare came into being

By Julian E. Zelizer

Before Congress passed Medicare and Medicaid in 1965 millions of elderly Americans lacked health insurance. They could not afford to go to the hospital, nor could they cover the cost of a physician. Medical breakthroughs ranging from antibiotics to new surgical procedures kept increasing the cost of health care, but the elderly were left out in the cold, and were unable to buy the insurance that was being given to workers in manufacturing jobs.

For them, just going to the hospital could result in bills that would take a decade to pay off. The old then squeaked by on getting special rates from doctors and hospitals who knew they had limited resources. Many relied upon their families to help them pay. There was no safety net whatsoever: One 1963 survey found that 9 out of 10 couples, and 8 out of 10 elderly individuals, paid for their own care without help from government or private sources.

Since 1946 through 1952, when Harry Truman was president, liberals had argued that the United States lagged behind other countries by failing to guarantee health care to all of its citizens. But in the ensuing decades, health care reform had been a losing issue for Democrats. Taking on the health care

issue was a top liberal issue, but it wasn't easy. The U.S. had a well-developed system of private health care, which meant that when liberals pushed for their policy, those with a vested interest in the existing system—including doctors—would have reason to say no. The process of crafting Medicare and Medicaid, building a federal program on top of a well-established private system, left scars on the legislation itself so that these unresolved arguments from half a century ago still haunt American healthcare today.

In 1949, the American Medical Association and congressional conservatives had defeated President Truman's plan to provide national health insurance for all Americans by branding the proposal as "socialized medicine" and warning that patients would lose their relationship to their doctors. During the mid-1950s, liberals narrowed their focus by proposing a federal health care program for the elderly, paying for the cost of hospital insurance through Social Security taxes. President John F. Kennedy picked up on the idea and pushed for Medicare in 1962 and 1963.

But congressional conservatives and the AMA blocked the proposal. California Gov. Ronald Reagan produced a record that the wives of doctors in the AMA played during coffee klatches in which he warned: "One of the traditional methods of imposing statism or socialism on a people has been by way of medicine." The AMA distributed posters that doctors hung in their offices, warning patients that should Congress pass Medicare, bureaucrats would make their next medical decisions. "The doctors in Florida agreed that the first three minutes of every consultation with every patient," said Florida Sen. Claude Pepper, "would be devoted to attacking socialized medicine..."

But the politics changed in the spring of 1965. Lyndon Johnson won a landslide re-election against Arizona Sen. Barry Goldwater, a right-wing Republican who spent much of his campaign blasting Medicare proposals. With Goldwater's defeat,

many Republicans believed that they would have to move to the center and work with the administration to survive. The election produced huge Democratic majorities in the House and Senate, with many of the new members having entered into Congress determined to pass the languishing health care proposal.

Johnson, sensing that he might be victorious, told one of his top advisors, Wilbur Cohen, to find a bill that would please Wilbur Mills, the conservative chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. "You get him something, though ... if labor will buy, that he can call a Mills bill, that's what it amounts to..." Johnson understood that his time was limited, and urged everyone to move as fast as possible. "For God sakes, don't let dead cats stand on your porch," he said about the Medicare bill—explaining that if a bill sat around too long, like a carcass, it would begin to "stink."

Republicans, eager to distinguish themselves from Goldwater, proposed their own alternatives to Medicare. One proposal provided insurance to cover the cost of physicians, paid for through general tax revenue and a contribution from participants. Another program would provide health care to the poor, those who were "medically indigent" and couldn't afford care on their own.

When the House Ways and Means Committee met to discuss the three plans in early March, administration officials were worried that their plan would not be able to garner enough support to pass the committee. But Chairman Mills, who decided that it was no longer possible to hold back the tide on the legislation, given that so many of the new members elected in 1964 had promised to deliver on Medicare, shocked everyone in a closed committee hearing. He turned to Wilbur Cohen and said: "Maybe it would be a good idea if we put all three of these bills together. You go back and work this out overnight and see what there is to this."

In that moment Mills transformed himself from the top opponent to the main architect of the new program. The rest was history. The bill moved through the Ways and Means Committee, the House, and finally the Senate. Johnson was happy to give Mills all the credit in exchange for a bill, though the president was taken aback at just how expansive the revised program would be.

Johnson traveled to Independence, Mo., to sign the Social Security Amendments of 1965 into law on July 30, 1965, with Harry Truman standing by his side. The final legislation, officially called the Social Security Amendments of 1965, contained three parts. The first, Part A, provided hospital insurance to elderly Americans covered by Social Security paid for through the payroll tax. Part B was a voluntary program that covered doctor's bills, paid for through a combination of general tax revenue and premium contributions from recipients. Finally, Part C, which we now call Medicaid, provided health care coverage for poor Americans who were "medically indigent." The final part was much more like a welfare program, administered by the states and paid for through a combination of federal and state money.

Yet even at a moment when liberalism was strong, Medicare proponents still had to make a number of consequential compromises because of America's resistance toward strong government. The most important was that Medicare and Medicaid provided this insurance within the existing health care system. As the sociologist Paul Starr has argued, the system layered the federal insurance on top of the existing system, thereby leaving many of the dysfunctional elements of American health care fully in place.

Medicare and Medicaid also stuck to the American political tradition of distinguishing between "deserving" and "undeserving" recipients of government help. This was a central feature of political discourse about government assistance since the start of the Republic, as the historian

Michael Katz has written. In this case, the government provided benefits based on status rather than as a right.

With Medicare and Medicaid, you had to be old or you had to be poor to receive this help. You couldn't just be an American.

The result was that even in a moment of victory, liberals legitimated a narrower vision of public policy than existed in other comparable systems in Europe. The fact that Medicare depended on a Social Security tax, which was sold as a way of showing this was an "earned benefit" likewise confirmed a limited vision of the obligations of government.

And then there was the problem of cost control. During the final weeks of negotiation over the bill, Ways and Means Chairman Wilbur Mills pushed back against efforts to include stronger regulatory mechanisms to control health care costs in the legislation. The final law allowed hospitals to determine what a "reasonable fee" would be, with a guarantee that the government would pay it. The result was skyrocketing costs over the next few decades. Although Congress did impose tighter cost controls during the 1980s, the overall strength of the federal government remained limited and health care providers came to rely on high charges.

All of these compromises, which made Medicare and Medicaid possible in 1965, would have long-lasting effects. By providing health insurance to the elderly the program made a huge difference. In 1963, one of every five Americans who lived below the poverty line never had been examined by a doctor, and poor people used medical facilities less than others. By 1970 that proportion had fallen to about 8 percent. Most elderly Americans had access to hospitals and doctors. Medicaid vastly expanded over the next few decades to include pregnant women, kids, and other categories of Americans who have limited access to care. By 2011, close to one-third of all Americans, not just the elderly, were covered by Medicare and Medicaid.

Hospital administrators, doctors and other people in the health care system now depended on these federal dollars. State governments counted on Medicaid dollars in their health care budgets. The programs became so ingrained in the national political consciousness that when conservatives rallied to oppose President Obama's Affordable Care Act in 2009—which achieved some cost savings through cuts in Medicare—they held up signs saying “Get Your Government Hands off My Medicare.” The signs were ironic and funny, but also the best evidence of success, namely that even the right wing accepted these plans as part of the status quo.

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