

WELLS FARGO ADVISORS **Nominate a friend and you could win \$500.**
Do you know a Second-Half Champion — someone past age 50 whose second half of life has taken on a completely different purpose than the first half? [Nominate a champion](#)

50+ **Second-Half Champions**

PASADENA STAR NEWS E-Edition
 Subscribe to our electronic edition!
[CLICK HERE](#)

Weather: PASADENA, CA | Now: 37°F | High: 53°F | Low: 34°F | 5-Day Forecast

Live Traffic: 10W 210W 57S 60SS 710N 110N 60W

Home Delivery | E-Edition | Subscriber Services |
 This Site Web Search powered by **YAHOO! SEARCH** Alerts | RSS |

Home News Sports Business Opinions Entertainment Features Customer Care Jobs Autos Homes Obituaries Promote Your Biz

Marketplace

Font Resize

LISTEN TO STORY
[More Podcasts](#)
 Presented By: **Don't Tax Our Health Care**
 Sign The Petition- We Need Health

Nat Hentoff: Will Obama send flowers to Obamacare victims?

Posted: 12/08/2009 05:45:47 PM PST

Nat Hentoff: Will Obama send flowers to Obamacare victims?

THE callousness of the Harry Reid Democratic majority in bullying through a very cost-efficient health-care bill for President Obama's eager pen to sign was disgracefully clear when both the House and Senate, on party-line votes, decided to cut \$43 billion of Medicare spending on what The New York Times' Robert Pear described (Dec. 5) as "home health services, a lifeline for homebound Medicare beneficiaries, which keeps them out of hospitals and nursing homes." The president, I'm sure, was pleased.

To put a human face on the grim effects of severing that lifeline, Robert Pear, long due for a Pulitzer for his health-care reporting, introduced Delmer A. Wilcox, 89, of Caribou, Maine. He "lives alone, is losing his vision, uses a walker and has chronic diseases of the lungs, heart and kidneys. He said his condition would deteriorate quickly without the regular visits he received from Visiting Nurses of Aroostook, a unit of Eastern Maine Home Care."

But President Obama has emphasized (as he did during an interview with New York Times' columnist David Leonhardt): "The chronically ill and those toward the end of their lives are accounting for potentially 80 percent of the total health-care bill out here."

For cost purposes, should Reid take into account how much longer Mr. Wilcox has to live?

Another senator, the often-independent Maine Republican Susan Collins, does not make

Advertisement

DON'T Let the Dentist Fool You
 Single mom discovers 1 simple trick to turn yellow teeth white from home. [Read How](#)

Do NOT BLEACH
 Learn 1 simple trick, discovered by a mom, to turn yellow teeth white. [Read How](#)

such terminal calculations. "The Medicare home benefit," she told The New York Times (Dec. 6), "is under attack. The impact of these cuts will ultimately fall on seniors. Home health agencies will simply not be able to afford to serve seniors living in smaller communities off rural roads."

With regard to the president's intense concern with health-care cost-effectiveness, Collins adds (New York Times, Dec. 5): "Home care and hospice have consistently proven to be cost-effective and compassionate alternatives to institutional care."

This has been true not only in smaller communities off rural roads, but throughout the nation. As Republican Sen. Mike Johanns of Nebraska tried to remind his colleagues across the aisle (a transcript is available on his Web site, johanns.senate.gov): "These are truly some of the most vulnerable Americans. Yet in order to

finance this new entitlement, this bill takes money out of that much-needed program, and it places the cuts on the backs of these Americans, our most vulnerable Americans."

The great majority of congressional Democrats, however, obediently followed "commander" Reid. As John Fund reported in the Wall Street Journal (Dec. 4): "The party leadership has made it clear that anyone who votes against health care (as written by the leadership) will have a difficult time passing their own bills in the future."

When I was a kid, I used to read that the U.S. Senate was "the greatest deliberative body in the world." Not that Republican majority leaders have been averse to ensuring party loyalty by stringent means; but for the Democratic machine to use such bare-knuckles tactics to pass this legislation so directly involving the future lifespans of so many Americans (regardless of age or political affiliation) should make President Obama pause.

- Most Viewed** **Most Emailed**
1. Pasadena officially kicks-off the season
 2. Larry Wilson: Cold weather heats up debate over global warming
 3. "Polar" will be shown free at Laemmle Playhouse 7
 4. Monrovia High's preparation for football title bid is intense
 5. Nat Hentoff: Will Obama send flowers to Obamacare victims?
 6. Two games in Pasadena's Rose Bowl will give region an economic boost
 7. Rosemead slaughterhouse steps away from closure
 8. Officials to close Raymond Annex post office
 9. Talkin' 'bout practice: Lakers' Bryant shoots another winner ... in intrasquad scrimmage
 10. BOYS SOCCER PREVIEW: St. Francis has lofty goals in its sight

More News

- Rosemead slaughterhouse steps away from closure
- Women, children held captive by armed men in Bassett
- Memorial set for former Duarte High student
- Guzman steps down after successful year as MUSD board president
- Mother of late Diamond Bar mayor dies
- Bill holds hope for IndyMac depositors
- Obama pushes for new stimulus, jobs spending
- Santa Fe Springs shooting leaves one dead, one

Free Credit Report and all 3 Scores

Free 3-bureau Credit Report - Includes Transunion, Equifax, Experian
www.freecreditreportsins.com

What Is Your Credit Score?

Credit Report and Score -- \$0 Now. Fast, Free And Secure!
www.FreeCreditReport.com

Laser Spine Institute: Free MRI Review

Get Complimentary MRI Review and Rediscover your life without back pain!
LaserSpineInstitute.com

[injured](#)

[Larry Wilson: Cold weather heats up debate over global warming](#)
[Pasadena officially kicks-off the season](#)

Market Watch



Check the markets
 Look up quotes.
 Build your portfolio.

Nasdaq	2164.34	-8.65
NYSE	7034.51	-21.75
AMEX	1763.09	+3.77
S&P 500	1089.95	-1.99
US Oil Fund	36.97	+0.12

Quotes delayed at least 20 mins.

Get Quote

Enter symbol
[Symbol Lookup](#)

But he is a very cool (as in cold) caretaker of the national budget.

Sen. John McCain is decidedly uncool during this debate, much to his credit. In a Dec. 5 interview with Don Imus, McCain said of the fears of Obamacare around the country: "There's not a lot of happy people out there, so you see tea parties, and you see people who are madder than they've ever been in their life. And frankly, I'm madder than I've ever been."

Me, too.

The day after Reid secured his 60 votes to continue Senate debate on Obamacare, CBS' "60 Minutes" -- "The Cost of Dying" - presented a cold, clear case for cutting the \$43 billion Medicare spending on home health services that serve not only the elderly, but certainly many other Americans. Opening the program chillingly, Steve Kroft played the actuarial rather than the compassionate blues:

"Every medical study ever conducted has concluded that 100 percent of all Americans will eventually die. This comes as no great surprise, but the amount of money being spent at the very end of people's lives probably will. Last year, Medicare paid \$50 billion just for doctor and hospital bills during the last two months of patients' lives - that's more than the budget of the Department of Homeland Security or the Department of Education.

"And it has been estimated that 20 to 30 percent of these medical expenditures may have had no meaningful impact."

If I may interrupt, sir, what about the impact on the other lives? During the program, we hear from Dr. Ira Byock in the intensive-care unit at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, N.H.:

"Denial of death at some point becomes a delusion, and we start acting in ways that make no sense whatsoever. And I think that's collectively what we're doing."

Toward the end of "The Cost of Dying," Dr. Byock lectures us on our moral responsibilities in these matters: "Collectively, as a culture, we really have to acknowledge that we're mortal," he said. "Get over it. And start looking at what a healthy, morally robust way for people to die looks like."

John McCain isn't getting over it. And in next year's midterm elections, we'll see how many other Americans won't. Are they immoral?

The economy will surely be a major factor in these coming elections, but I expect many Americans going to the polls will indeed be thinking robustly of their own mortality.

Nat Hentoff is a nationally renowned authority on the First Amendment and the Bill of Rights. He is a member of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, and the Cato Institute, where he is a senior fellow.

[BOOKMARK](#) [Print](#) [Email](#) [Font Resize](#) [Return to Top](#)

Local businesses related to this subject [view all](#)

[EB Specialist](#)

Handyman | Pasadena CA 91003

[North-west College](#)

College | Pasadena CA 91101

[Pasadena Star-News](#)

Newspaper | Pasadena CA 91106


[advertise your business here](#)

Type in your comments to post to the forum

Name
 (appears on your post)

Comments

Type the numbers you see in the image on the right:



Please note by clicking on "Post Comment" you acknowledge that you have read the [Terms of Service](#) and the comment you are posting is in compliance with such terms. **Be polite.** Inappropriate posts may be removed by the moderator. [Send us your feedback](#).

[Obama Wants You to Return to School](#)

Get Your Degree Now.
www.classesusa.com

[Need Affordable Health Care?](#)



Get Affordable Health Insurance Quotes
Online - Rates from
Health-Insurance-Quotes.com

[Obama Backs Insurance Regulation](#)

Drive Less than 2 Hours a Day? You
Could Get Auto
Auto-Insurance-Experts.com

Ads by Yahoo!

<p>GET STARTED NOW FOR \$20.10 REST OF 2009 FREE!*</p>	<p>washington sports clubs® </p> <p>Find the gym nearest you.</p>
---	---

[Copyright Notice](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Information](#) | [Subscriber Services](#) | [Mobile Edition](#) | [Site Map](#) | [RSS](#)  [MY YAHOO!](#)  | [MNG Corporate Site Map](#)

For more local Southern California News:

Copyright ©2009
Los Angeles Newspaper group

□