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Your Turn-03-13-09

CHIP expansion unwise

Re: "CHIP expansion is a wise investment," (Our Turn, March 2):

Contrary to the editorial, expansion of the Children's Health Insurance Program is not a wise investment, and no local tax burden will truly be relieved as a result of expansion. In fact, Texas will have to spend hundreds of millions of state tax dollars to even utilize the CHIP federal matching funds if the program expands.

Texas Health and Human Services Commissioner Albert Hawkins testified recently that expanding CHIP eligibility will require an additional \$127.6 million in state funds over the next two years. Why expand when we still aren't covering those already eligible? This year, more than 170,000 children projected to be eligible are not enrolled in the program.

The editorial says parents of uninsured children avoid early treatment of illnesses due to financial considerations. The reality is Medicaid and CHIP patients lack incentives to go the doctor when they are ill due to out-of-pocket costs. Instead, they choose the emergency room — with little to no out of pocket cost to them, but high costs to the local taxpayer.

Instead of expanding a government and taxpayer-funded program, legislators should be looking at ways to enroll those children who are already eligible, and to design a private insurance product available for purchase to all CHIP applicants determined to be ineligible or are disenrolled. Legislators would be wise to make private insurance a more attractive and accessible option for Texans.

Andrea Whitman,

program coordinator,

Texas Public Policy Foundation

Re: "State should pass measure to protect media sources," (Our Turn, March 6):

Why should media sources be protected? Here's just one example.

Let's say, theoretically, that a governmental agency is not following its own rules (perish the thought). A citizen tells a reporter about it, and the reporter does a story. If the citizen's identity must be revealed, he is not protected from potential retaliation. This practice stifles freedom of discourse and results in government continuing to get away with things it shouldn't be doing. Accountability goes down the drain.

Assuming knowledge of criminal acts is excepted, I can't think of one good reason why media sources should not be protected.

Camille White,

Helotes

Re: "Violence knows no border," (Views, Sunday):

Ruben Navarrette came close to calling gun running what it is — gun trafficking. Gun traffickers are contributing to Mexico's failed state, murders, kidnappings, broken border and its economic demise as much as drug traffickers.

Maybe we can make a deal: You don't traffic drugs here, and we won't traffic guns there. "Gun running" sounds too tame, like rum running. Who ever heard of drug runners? Sounds like a clerk who works in a pharmacy. Gun traffickers, the American way. Almost sounds patriotic.

Frank Montalvo

Let me be the first to complain about the increased traffic on Loop 1604 at the intersections of Shaenfield, New Guilbeau and Braun, due to the future homes and businesses that will be built on land just cleared north of Culebra on Loop 1604.

Once again, San Antonio will play catch up to traffic problems due to growth. Why doesn't the city put some of the stimulus money in the bank now so when overpasses are desperately needed at those intersections, it will be available? I don't understand why property is allowed to be sold to developers without any thought of the impact that will be felt on traffic on an already congested stretch of highway.

Lets be proactive, instead of reactive.

Gregory Fox

Does anyone dare question the patriotism of the investor class?

William Stavisky

Red, white and blue


Big headache coming

Calling it what it is

Keeping them honest

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