

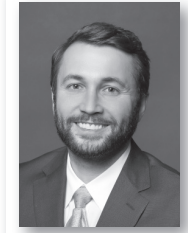
## Your Capitol Voice

This week in the House of Representatives we addressed a really important issue: sustainability of our Medicaid program. (Do not confuse this with the federal Medicare program.) Medicaid is by far the fastest growing part of the state's budget and policy to ensure its sustainability is necessary.

Currently, Iowa insurance companies pay less than 1% in provider tax to the state of Iowa. This is one of the lowest rates in the entire country.

Most states have a provider rate between 2-4%. The legislation proposed would increase that provider rate for only 9 months from 1% to 3.5%. It is estimated that this one-time increase would generate more than \$250 million in funding for Medicaid, which would all go to help preserve the critical services the program offers.

I want to make it clear that this is a temporary increase for the insurance companies, NOT for Iowans. I expect them to pay this fee and not pass it along to Iowans because in 2025 Wellmark had a net profit of \$176 million dollars. I am a proud capitalist and free-market thinker but the healthcare system in Iowa and the United States is far from a free market system. Government at the federal level chooses winners and losers and then passes that down to the states in the form of mandates.



**YOUR CAPITOL VOICE**

**Rep. Bobby Kaufmann**

Big insurance is saying that they will have to raise premiums to make up for the "loss." I reject that argument. Will they lower the rates once the 9 months is up? I doubt it. Did you see lower premium rates over the last four years when we had the lowest rates in the country for them? Of course not. The story doesn't add up and I intend to hold them accountable.

It is disingenuous when some Democratic rep-

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## The Gruenhagen Gazette

The 10th week of the legislative session began as we approached the final major legislative deadline. The last "funnel" deadline falls this week and narrows the focus to the bills that will be considered for the remainder of the session. This deadline brought a high level of activity in subcommittees and committees as we worked through proposals in both chambers. With this deadline now behind us, attention turns to reconciling legislation between the House and Senate. While the funnel process reduced the number of active bills, several major priorities remain. Legislators will continue working toward agreement so that these measures can be sent to the governor's desk. If you have questions about legislative activity or specific bills, please feel free to reach out.

This week also marked National Agriculture Week, an annual event that recognizes the impact of agriculture on daily life across the United States. Farming remains the foundation of Iowa's economy, identity, and infrastructure. Agriculture and related industries make up more than 22 percent of the state's total economic output, and Iowa continues to lead the nation in pork and corn production.

Last week, a new report from the Iowa Cancer Registry and the Agricultural Health Study provided updated information on cancer rates in Iowa. This remains an important topic, and many Iowans are looking for clearer answers. Earlier this year, a separate report from Iowa Health and Human Services and the University of Iowa Institute for Public Health Practice, Research and

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Stuart Clark Editor and Publisher

Krista Clark Reporter, Editorial Writer/Columnist

Matthew Dickinson Sports editor

Darla Walling Proofreader

Annie Schroder Advertising & Graphic Arts

Sue Hall Government Reporter

Kit Phelps Reporter, Ad Sales

(USPS-631-520)

Official paper of Tipton and Cedar county; Published weekly (Wednesday) by the Conservative Publishing Co., PO Box 271, 124 W. 5th St., Tipton, Iowa 52772-0271. Periodicals postage paid at Tipton, Iowa 52772-0271 and additional mailing offices.

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

Cedar and adjoining counties: One year, \$48; 2 years, \$92; 3 years, \$138 Elsewhere in the U.S.: One year, \$62; Winter delivery charge, \$5. Single copies, \$1.00. College year subscription, \$38.

ADVERTISING RATES: National, \$10.80 per column inch; local, \$10.80 per column inch.

CLASSIFIEDS: 25¢ per single word first insertion, \$10.00 minimum; 50¢ per word each following insertion without copy change, \$8 minimum. All classifieds must be paid in advance.

CLASSIFIED PAGE RATE: \$11.15 per column inch.

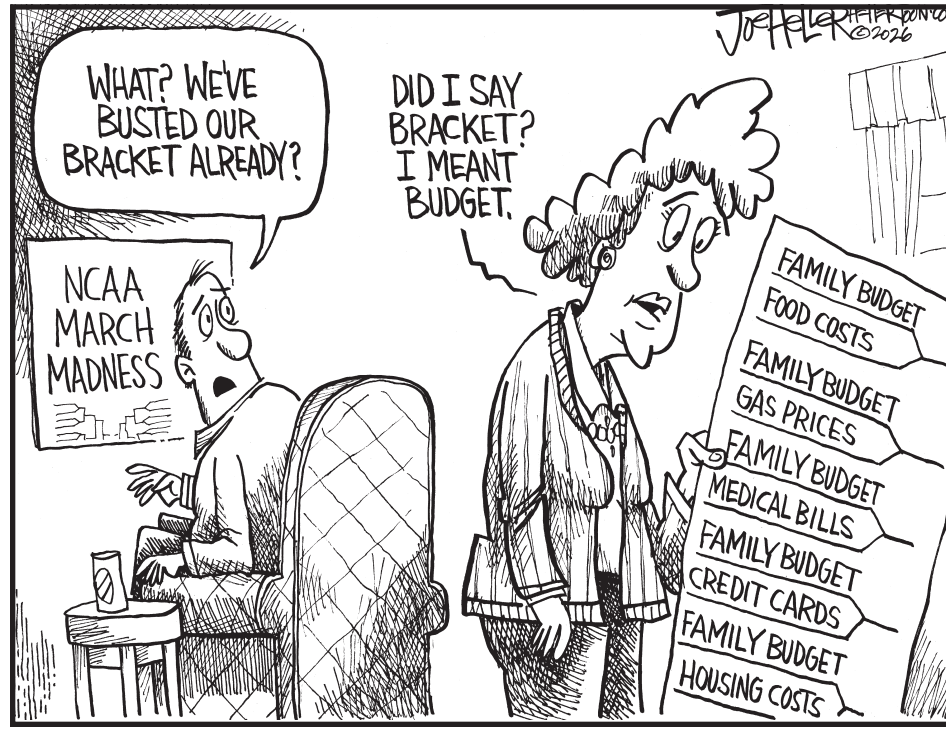
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Subscription address changes should be mailed 10 days in advance to The Tipton Conservative and Advertiser, P.O. Box 271, Tipton, Iowa 52772-0271. Phone 563-886-2131. Fax 563-886-6466.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Tipton Conservative and Advertiser, P.O. Box 271, Tipton, Iowa 52772-0271.

This newspaper is a member of the National Newspaper Association, the Iowa Press Association and the Iowa Newspaper Advertising Service.



## Gross National Debt Reaches \$39 Trillion

The gross national debt of the United States reached \$39 trillion on March 17, according to the U.S. Treasury. The gross debt reached its previous milestone of \$38 trillion in October of last year. Meanwhile, debt held by the public – the measure of debt preferred by economists – stands at over \$31 trillion.

The following is a statement from Maya MacGuineas, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget:

Surpassing \$39 trillion in gross debt is an embarrassing milestone that both parties have helped build over decades, and neither seems particularly interested in addressing it before we hit \$40 trillion.

No matter what metric one chooses to examine our fiscal trajectory, we are clearly headed in the wrong direction. Gross debt is now \$39 trillion; debt held by the public recently surpassed \$31 trillion for the first time; deficits are approaching \$2 trillion; and deficits as a share of the economy are twice as large as the 3% goal many economists and bipartisan policymakers believe we ought to be targeting.

Markets are paying close attention to our fiscal situation, and every time we hit a

new milestone, we risk spooking them.

Choosing to abandon our fiscal responsibilities like this does not exist in a vacuum; in fact, it wreaks havoc on our economy and everyday life. Higher debt exacerbates inflationary pressures, squeezes out investment in our economy, allows interest costs to dominate our defense spending, leaves us vulnerable to emergencies and geopolitical turmoil, and could even provoke a fiscal crisis.

Rather than ignoring these milestones as both parties have largely done, policymakers should acknowledge them for what they are and begin pivoting toward a more stable course. That means committing to No New Borrowing, establishing a fiscal goal for the nation like 3% deficits to GDP, adopting a Super PAYGO rule to require any new costs to be paid for twice over, beginning to address the long-term solvency of our imperiled trust funds, and putting in place a fiscal commission to develop a bipartisan debt deal.

And finally, we should adopt a Break Glass plan in case we have an emergency before our lawmakers put the needed changes in place.

### YOUR VIEW

#### Voter Suppression

I am proud to be a poll worker and ensure the legitimacy of elections here in Iowa.

But now President Trump is insisting that Republicans in the US Senate pass the SAVE (Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act) soon, before the Midterm Election.

It is advertised as a way to prevent non-citizens from being on the voter rolls. The act would require Americans to show proof of citizenship, such as a certified birth certificate with their birth name or passport, to register to vote in elections. Absentee ballots are up for debate also. The GOP Federal has passed it in the House of Representatives.

The Federal government is requiring that within 30 days of the bill's enactment, states would be required to submit their voter registration lists to the Department of Homeland Security, which would compare them against the 'SAVE' database. That list is intended to track the immigration and citizenship status of all voters in the state. The Auditor's office already verifies the voter application, so lists do not need to be given to the Federal government.

Leave voting in the states' hands, where the Constitution documents in Article S4.C1.2-States and Elections Clause. Tell Grassley and Ernst to NOT pass this form of voter suppression.

Jean Semsch Durant

#### 'A Shameless Slight-of-Hands'

To the editor:

Perhaps there's less public outrage over the current government shutdown – as opposed to the record-long government shutdown earlier this federal fiscal year or the second shorter government shutdown – since this shutdown impacts just one department and most employees of the Department of Homeland Security are required to work although they aren't being paid. Yet, if more people understood the political slight-of-hands behind the U.S. Senate's inability to pass a budget for D.H.S., there probably should be more outrage now than during the first two shutdowns.

U.S. Senate Republicans have offered concessions and compromises on all but one of the other party's demands for reform of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Yet both parties have drawn a line over the

issue of "judicial warrants." Regrettably, electronic media outlets have given virtually no time to explaining the critical difference between judicial and administrative warrants. Inevitably, it will be a difference of life and death for some American citizens and perhaps for American democracy, itself.

Part of the problem is one which I've mentioned in previous letters: the judicial branch limits access. For example, one must be admitted to practice law in order to appear before the court. That requires three years of law school and passage of a "bar exam." The judicial branch creates other barriers to petitions and motions which can be brought before the court. One of those barriers for law enforcement officers are requirements to obtain an arrest warrant. To make matters worse, the list of warrant requirements is different for state and federal courts.

This is the critical point: in order to obtain an arrest warrant for an illegal alien in federal court, law enforcement officers must provide the date that the illegal alien entered the U.S. Most illegal aliens with criminal records avoided immigration checkpoints – although knowing that they'd be processed and released into the U.S. – instead becoming "got-aways." Thus, no one in law enforcement has a record of when such illegal aliens entered the U.S.

In short, if passed by Congress, a judicial warrant requirement renders it impossible for law enforcement officers to obtain a warrant in order to do their job.

What we're witnessing isn't merely a government shutdown – although that would be disgusting enough. It's an attempt by the minority party in the U.S. Senate to hijack a federal agency in order to prevent that agency from enforcing the law, 8 US Code 1226.

We were taught in school that one of the "pillars" of our constitutional government is the rule of law. If one caucus in the U.S. Senate succeeds in taking away the rule of law by making it impossible to enforce that law, it renders that caucus' claim to be "defending democracy" to be a shameless slight-of-hands. To quote U.S. Senator Ted Cruz, their lust for political control has become so pervasive "that they're willing to destroy democracy in order to seize power."

Sincerely,  
Richard Woods  
Mechanicsville

## 1776 Republic Regulators

Greetings Cedar County, I promise to the readers of this Newspaper to always give the truth and the Facts.

To be a Regulator is to control accuracy and keep in check the flow of something, in this case truth, facts, and information to maintain our Constitutional Republic in its original Intent.

Unlike the 82nd Divisionists and the former Chairman of the Cedar County Bolshevik Party that engage in intentional misleading of the truth.

Don't Forget The 82ND Divisionists Theatrics are funded by Multi Billionaires George and Alexander Soros ACT BLUE, and Communist Open Society Foundation, and Grow Grants funded by Gavin Newsome and the State of California.

They are good at spending their Communist Billionaires funds on more theat-

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## An Uncomfortable Topic

So, did you ever consider marrying a cousin? I didn't either. Don't misunderstand, I have dozens of cousins and about half of them are females, many of them pleasant, smart and attractive. But when I was looking for a mate, I preferred to swim in someone else's gene pool!

If you have, indeed, married or considered marrying a cousin I mean no offense. In some cultures, in the United States, first cousin marriages are acceptable. However, 24 U.S. states prohibit the practice.

The subject came to mind recently when I was surfing the Internet and found a Consanguinity Chart.

Consanguinity is a fancy word for the measurement of biological distance between family members. It is rooted in the Latin word *consanguineus* meaning "of the same blood." Consanguinity is a legal element in marriage and inheritance matters.

The chart I found—A Table of Consanguinity—easily identifies one's relationship to relatives.

For instance, the chart tells me that my father's first cousin is my "first cousin, once removed." My father's first cousin's son is my "second cousin."

My father is one of six children; my mother is one of 12. All four of my grandparents were from large families. I have dozens of first cousins and scores of second cousins.

In fact, my parents have mutual first cousins—two of my paternal grandfather's sisters married two of my maternal grandmother's brothers—meaning I have many second cousins to whom I am a second cousin twice. (It's smalltown stuff and it's legal.)

I have relatives who married first cousins and that's where this consanguinity chart comes into play. In clinical genetics, a union is defined as consanguineous if the partners are second cousins or closer.

Geneticists know that if partners are second cousins or closer the risk of offspring suffering from health or birth defects is elevated.

To the best of my knowledge, my relatives who married first cousins lucked out. Their children appeared to be healthy and normal.

For many of my generation the thought of marrying a cousin is rather uncomfortable. I'm sure my female cousins hold the same view.

In many cultures over the centuries, however, marrying a cousin was not unusual. The Old Testament's Mosaic law explicitly outlawed many close marital or intimate relationships but said nothing about cousins getting together. In fact, there are Old Testament accounts of a parent sending a child to their home country to marry someone from the clan.

I enjoy genealogy and in researching my families back in the Netherlands and northwestern Germany I have found several instances of cousins marrying. My East Frisian ancestors were rather nonchalant about the practice. I have read old Low German adages on the topic. One of those adages indicated (and this is a very loose translation): "If you marry someone whose (chimney) smoke you can see you know what you are getting." At a time when the oldest son brought his bride into his parent's home to live it was important that the bride and her mother-in-law got along.

World history is full of what are called consanguineous marriages—marriages between cousins, nieces and uncles and other examples. Common among royals in Europe from the medieval era to World War I these relationships ensured alliances and maintained control over hereditary territories. (That's how, as a descendant of German and Dutch stock, I am very, VERY distantly related to King Charles III of the United Kingdom. No need to bow.)

As time went on, many children of those consanguineous marriages developed serious health problems and birth defects.

In parts of the world, consanguineous marriages and their related health challenges continue to this day.

Consanguinity is a term used in the legal community. If you die intestate—without a will—consanguinity is used to determine who gets what from your estate.

So, there you have it—an old practice, a new word and a topic that seems uncomfortable. All at no charge.

You're welcome!  
(Arvid Huisman can be contacted at huismaniowa@gmail.com. ©2026 by Huisman Communications.)

## 82nd Indivisible

Cutting Cedar County Services? Start with the Supervisors



The Cedar County Board of Supervisors has set the public hearing for their proposed budget

on Tuesday, March 24 at 8:15 a.m. when most working people are... at work. This is NOT an accident. The supes prefer it this way so they can continue to say things like Jeff Kaufmann's "waiting in line will not dissuade anyone from calling for property tax relief" or "I wouldn't expect to see any more complaints if inspections were under state management than by county personnel."

Kaufmann likes it best when he can fly under the radar pretending that everyone will agree to

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