

# OPINION

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## Why did McCain return?

By Jennifer Rubin JULY 25  
(Right Turn Opinion piece for the Washington Post)

The speculation in the chattering class is that Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), who was recently diagnosed with brain cancer, is returning to help his fellow Republicans move health care over the line — or at least to 50 votes, thereby permitting Vice President Pence to cast a deciding vote and at least begin debate. After all, that's what partisan politicians do, and McCain has lived his political life in the GOP. But wait. When was McCain ever just a partisan politician?

He may indeed be doing just as the political watchers speculate, returning to help move the bill. He's been as outspoken in his objections to Obamacare as any Republican. Alternatively, he might be back to move the

National Defense Authorization Act along, a fitting task for a man who has given more than we can even imagine to our military and veterans. And, certainly, it would be just like McCain to get back to work because working for America is like breathing air for him.

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) has spoken out against bigotry and injustice during his more than 30 years in the Senate. (Thomas Johnson/The Washington Post)

However, let's consider another possibility. (I honestly don't know so this is not a prediction, let alone a scoop.) McCain recently has railed against a chaotic process and abandonment of sound, bipartisan legislative action. Others on the GOP side have as well, but they are — how to put this delicately? — too cowardly in most instances to do anything about it. But McCain? Why should he now — of all times — suddenly stoop to their level, the level of craven politician?

None of us know our last day so, the adage goes, we should live each day as if it were our last. That's very hard to do, but the issue for McCain has been very real. He did not know if he would survive the Hanoi Hilton. He only knew what he should do so long as he was alive. Now, he is confronted with another challenge for which mortality stares him in the face. Once again (or still?) he can only decide how to conduct himself so long as he remains a U.S. Senator.

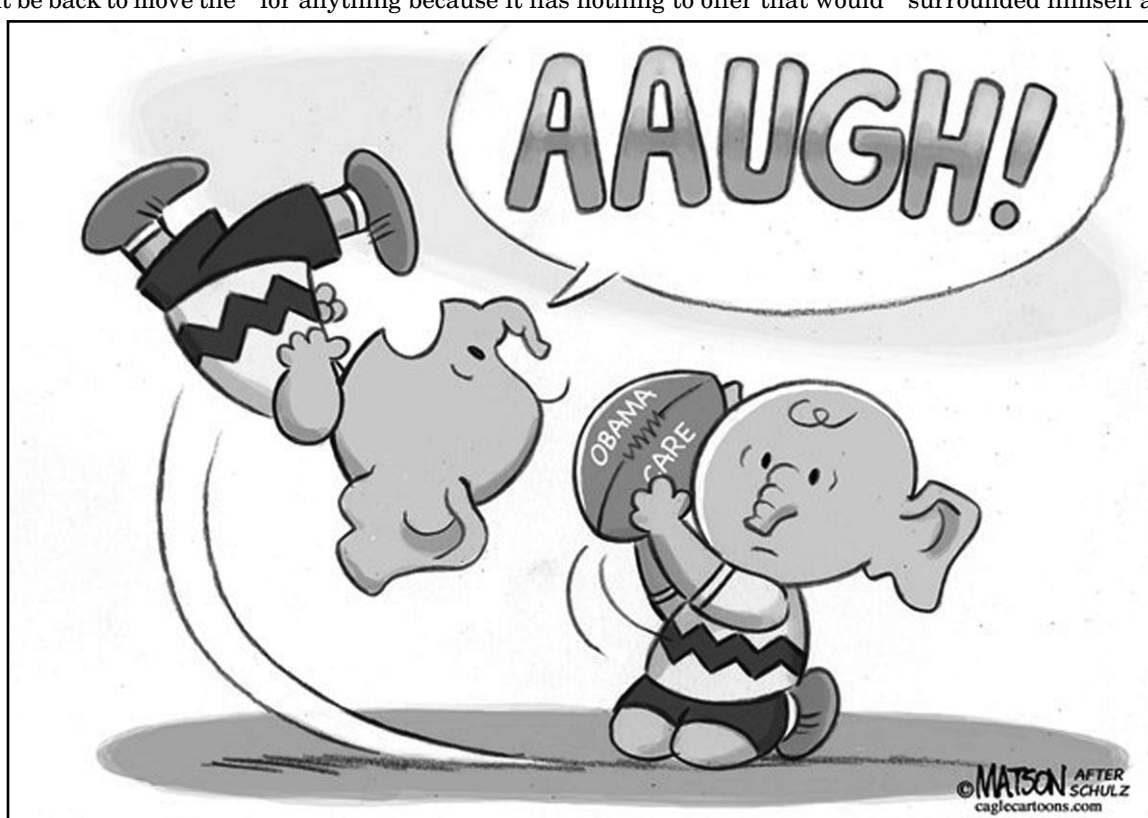
He has the opportunity not only to cast a vote but grab the country and his party by the throat. Look! Look what's happening! The party is reduced to voting for anything because it has nothing to offer that would

be an improvement over Obamacare. Seniors and the poor will suffer greatly in his state. Moreover, feverish and irrational partisanship now clouds the judgment of every member of Congress. It makes for gridlock but also primes the country to be swayed by a demagogue who tramples our democratic norms and everything that is decent. Repair of our democracy comes only when one side or one person says, "Enough!" This has to end. We have to work together so that we can address real problems on health care, jobs and more. And then there is the matter of Russia (off topic, but would anyone begrudge him the opportunity to speak?). The president surrounded himself at best with easy prey for Russian operatives and now is willing to destroy the Justice Department, his most loyal Cabinet member, the rule of law and the office of the presidency to protect himself. The Congress has the power to say: No. Its members can say, "Fire Sessions for having properly recused himself and/or fire Robert S. Mueller and you're done. The party will no longer defend Trump."

Yes, McCain could have returned to say something along those lines. Or maybe not. Let's wait and see.

*Jennifer Rubin writes the Right Turn blog for The Post, offering reported opinion from a conservative perspective. Follow @JRubinBlogger.*

*Rubin wrote this column on July 25, on July 27 McCain cast the deciding "no" vote against the last scaled down attempt to repeal the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare).*



## Lowest unemployment rate in Tennessee history



July Report  
By Governor Bill Haslam

We've received a lot of exciting news recently, both in terms of where we are and where we are headed as a state.

In a matter of just a few days, we learned we have the lowest unemployment rate in Tennessee's recorded history, a record number of high school students filed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as part of their pathway to college, and we announced 1,000 new manufacturing jobs in Bledsoe County. (See above for a photo from the ribbon cutting ceremony.)

We believe all of this is the result of the policies we have put in place working with the Tennessee General Assembly in education, workforce training and economic development. It shows we are on the right track in making our state the Tennessee it can be.

Additionally, we announced two weeks ago that after 16 years of system-wide reform, a thoroughly transformed foster care system and a lot of hard work, the Department of Children's Services is free of federal court oversight brought by litigation known as the "Brian A." lawsuit. This is monumental for Tennessee's children and the state as the federal government agrees we are providing service to children in a way that models what it should look like for the rest of the country.

On July 7, we opened the Tennessee Volunteer Challenge Academy, an alternative residential program operated by the Tennessee National Guard. The Academy helps teens who were headed down the wrong path earn their high school diploma, making them eligible

for Tennessee Promise and helping us reach our Drive to 55 goal.

Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price traveled to Chattanooga on July 6 to discuss the opioid epidemic with me, other state leaders and treatment providers. Opioid addiction is one of the biggest challenges facing our state — and the entire country — and I appreciate the Trump administration for pledging to help tackle this issue.

Finally, as teachers across the state prepare to head back to the classroom (some are already there), I am grateful that several spent their last few days of summer with me at the first ever Teacher Leadership Summit hosted by the Department of Education and SCORE and the quarterly meeting of the Governor's Teacher Cabinet. To all teachers, principals, faculty and staff across the state, I wish you a great start to the school year.

As always, I appreciate your interest in our work. Feel free to email me at bill.haslam@tn.gov.

## The Boy Scouts of America deserved better



By Emily Weathers Kennedy

Back in the day, when I was growing up in Loretto, scouting was a big deal. From the time I was in Brownies and on meeting day got to wear my little brown uniform complete with beanie to school, to Cadettes and Seniors, when we dropped the uniform thing, I faithfully participated. I still have my sash from Juniors Troop 124 that is covered in

merit badges I earned. I recall being presented each time with one at our meeting by our leader, spurring me on to go after the next badge. I remember anticipating the trip to Rogers Department Store in downtown Florence where we shopped for scout treasures: uniforms, canteens, pocketknives, headbands, banners, handbooks, and dolls. We had the most glorious week day camp at the Farkle Farm, owned by the Riddle family. We learned to break camp, lash tables, lash latrines, build fires, cook with Bunsen burners, wash dishes in netted bags over campfire

water, and cook delicious dishes like foil dinners and banana boats which I still make.

We never interacted with the Boy Scouts as far as I can remember, and as an adult I always wondered why. Back then, though, the thought never occurred to me, or most likely my mother, who was my brother's Cub Scout leader. I doubt any girl at that age would have wanted to put up with those hooligans (in our opinion) who met upstairs in one of my dad's buildings in downtown Loretto anyway.

Joking aside, we all recognized that the Boy Scouts took their responsibility in the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) very seriously, and if we had compared notes, we would have discovered that we had been working on the some of the same merit badges. Now, this is a good thing in light of the fact that boys should know basic sewing just like being able to light a campfire.

To this day, the Boy Scouts distinguish its members with an Eagle Scout ranking. Along with 21 merit badges, to achieve this honor, a young man must also complete two to five years of training (including classroom) and many hours of community service before the age of 18.

Scouting is something unparalleled in character

building for both boys and girls. It has neither affiliation nor allegiance to any one religion or political party. Imagine the distress of former scouts across the country, then, when the president turned a recent speech during the Boy Scout Jamboree into a boogie (of former President Obama and former Secretary of State Clinton), shaming, partisan, political rally. When Trump injected his paranoia of the media, crowd sizes, and loyalty of his cronies peppered with foul language, he degraded his own office and the BSA. His remarks were way out of line, especially for the 30,000+ adolescents and teenagers in attendance.

Donald Trump was never a Boy Scout. His behavior even as an adult is the antitheses of a Boy Scout. Until he is able to control both his behavior AND his mouth, he should not be invited to speak anywhere beyond addresses to his base. Until he learns that there are some things that should NEVER BE POLITICIZED like the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, whose primary purpose is to build character, self-responsibility, civic-responsibility, and leadership into the younger generation, he must never have the opportunity to cause more harm than he has already caused. Too bad he wasn't a scout like his most recent predecessors Bush and Obama. He might understand there are more important things in the world other than himself and his crowd sizes.

## Who knew dogs could keep you so healthy?



Tyrades! by Danny Tyree

Alas, we haven't been a "dog family" since we had to euthanize poor old Turpy; but a time.com article titled "More Evidence That Owning A Dog Is Really Good For You" certainly grabbed my attention.

Not only can having a dog around the house lead to lower stress levels, decrease the risk of asthma in children and contribute to lower blood pressure, but the responsibility of caring for a canine can jolt older people out of a life-shortening sedentary lifestyle.

(Younger people? Owning a family dog USED to mean lots of romping and frolicking in the Great Outdoors. Now caring for a dog just jolts young couch potatoes into ordering a drone to walk the critter. But I digress.)

A recent study shows that older people who take their dogs for a walk take 2,760 steps more per day on average compared to non-owners. That's an extra 23 minutes a day of moderate exercise!

(Granted, this is very close to the amount of time that we cat owners spend letting the cat in and out — and looking at the feline's smug expression that says, "They thought Lincoln freed ALL the slaves? Puh-leeze.")

The findings of that study were strengthened by even more recent research by the University of East Anglia and the Center for Diet and Activity Research at the University of Cambridge.

True, common sense should make such studies unnecessary; but every little reminder/nudge helps. There are probably people out there waiting with bated breath,

thinking, "I wish the University of East Anglia and the University of Cambridge would give us some glimmer of indication whether we should leave the oven on while vacationing or give our Social Security number to a Nigerian general's widow. Enquiring minds want to know!"

If you're a self-identifying "older person" or care about someone who is, keep dog ownership in mind as a healthy lifestyle motivator. But, just as not every child gives high-quality lifelong support to an Easter rabbit, not everyone is prepared to care for "Man's Best Friend." Don't be presumptuous and provide a dog without discussing it. ("He followed me home, Ma. Can YOU keep him?")

Last year some anonymous kind soul dumped a mother dog and seven (!) puppies on my then-89-year-old mother. Only Shasta remains from the litter; but I've been foolhardy enough to take her on a few walks, and she could have a bright future competing in Truck & Tractor pulls. I guess whoever left those puppies thought they were giving my mother enough "moderate exercise" to re-create the Fountain of Youth and start singing "On The Good Ship Lollipop."

A mutually beneficial dog/owner relationship is something to prize, but beware of the law of unintended consequences. If all older people start spending an extra 23 minutes a day away from the TV, Pat and Vanna may wind up having a sedentary lifestyle and eating dog food.

Enjoy the relatively inexpensive health benefits of dogs while you still can. "Big Pharma" is probably

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