

BY PAUL BRESLAU

Political Extra

LET'S VOTE FOR DISTRICT 8 AND OTHER ARIZONA CANDIDATES that are committed to progress through bipartisan cooperation for important economic, educational, environmental, immigration and health care issues. Their approach should include input from industry experts, constituents, and other individuals and groups with unique and relevant expertise. This approach will, over time, continue to provide the best results attainable for Arizona.

A good health care platform is the topic of this article. A starting point is appreciation of the health care and financial services professionals that operate in District 8 and throughout Arizona. There are tens of thousands of doctors and their staffs, dentists and hygienists, hospitals and clinics, billing representatives, insurance companies and agents, and clerical staffs. They work hard, they vote and they are looking for bipartisan leadership on health care issues.

Recognizing that health care and its financing are extremely complicated issues involving billions of Arizona dollars is vital. The health care budget line item is a large percentage for each individual, family, business and government entity. The current health care environment took decades to create and it takes time to transition improvements into the system. Using platitudes such as "Universal Health Care" on one side and "Free Market" on the other will not solve anything. Those in leadership positions need to roll up their sleeves in a cooperative manner, dig down into the details, and find bipartisan solutions that can be implemented.

Ideals and values are important for any health care improvement plan. Everyone should have freedom of choice. True health care costs should be known by all. Mandates may provide temporary solutions but often have unintended consequences. Self-responsibility is vital but a safety net is needed. Technology and information are important ways to improve health care outcomes and to reduce expensive paperwork.

Continuing with specific and immediate improvements is an important objective. For example, will a "proof of health

insurance" clause for government contract bids help reduce the uninsured population in a fair and just way? A second example to consider is providing educational support for private Health Savings Accounts that are starting to catch on. Also, how can we learn from the failures and successes of other states? For example, the universal health care program instituted by the Republican Governor of Massachusetts (oxymoron?) may hold important solutions that Arizona can borrow.

Let's not destroy current options until replacements are proven over time. Health Care Group continues to play an important role for certain small businesses. The Arizona private health insurance market must continue to thrive and remain competitive. AHCCCS has a budget of \$1 billion and plays a vital role to a million less fortunate residents of our state. Each of us hopes to reach the Medicare age if not already there. What can be done to improve these systems while not breaking budgets? Finally, it is estimated that one million Arizonans have no insurance. How can this number be reduced?

Successfully improving health care and its financing by supporting bipartisan programs that make sense is a commitment for us all. Let's elect candidates that will work with fellow legislators from both parties with input from industry experts, constituents, and other individuals and groups with unique and relevant expertise. Please remember to vote on Nov. 7.

As always, your comments and suggestions are welcome.

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