

Legislative Update

By: Danny Ford

Redistricting, Medicaid and Telemarketing still top issues but share limelight with budget

On Wednesday of this week the House approved a legislative redistricting bill and sent it to the Senate for consideration. I joined 34 of my colleagues in voting against the measure because of serious problems with the constitutionality of the bill. When it reached the Senate, members of that chamber - unlike those who voted in favor of the bill in the House - honored the 200 year tradition that allows each chamber to draw its own districts. As a result, the Senate changed only the Senate portion of the bill and left the House map untouched.

Instead of concurring with the Senate amendment - and honoring tradition - the House voted to not concur with the bill. Why? Because although it contained the very same House Districts they approved two days earlier, politics is more important to them than people. As a result, the bill was sent to conference committee for consideration. As of filing this update, the conference committee was still meeting to reach a compromise on the bill.

We should have acted on redistricting last fall when we had time to dedicate to it alone, but Democrats offered excuse after excuse. Regardless of what the General Assembly does now, it appears the plan may end up in court. The Majority Party in the House would rather continue to labor this bill than give their full attention to other issues.

I think you will agree with me that it is time to recognize that in the face of a \$533 million budget shortfall it is time to move on to other serious issues. In his biennial budget address, the governor presented a budget plan that raids nearly every fund, uses one time allocations like lawsuit settlements to provide short term solutions to long term projects, and riddled with the tax and spend mentality that got us into the current debt. By setting redistricting aside, we can focus on making the budget more accountable to the taxpayers who ultimately foot the bill.

Bringing accountability to the Medicaid program received our attention last week when we took some steps to trim the beleaguered program's spending on prescription drugs by creating an oversight mechanism to review both their effectiveness and cost-efficiency. This week the House Health and Welfare

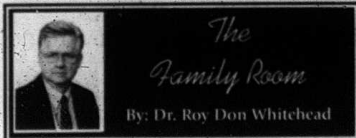
Committee passed an even more progressive measure that requires nearly all of the Medicaid program's recipients to co-pay for each prescription they fill. The co-pay is relatively small, around \$1 per medication, but will save an estimated \$8 million. Kentucky is currently only one of two states that don't require some sort of cost sharing.

The telemarketing bill I wrote about last week, which establishes a "zero-call" list for Kentuckians who want to have their name and telephone number removed from telemarketing list, passed the full House on a vote of 92-4. The bill included exemptions for businesses, that have a continuing relationship with the customer and those who are collecting debts. While Kentuckians will have the opportunity to participate in the "zero-call" list, the list has a limited effect and I do not believe the telephone will stop ringing until telemarketing is addressed on the federal level.

The House Judiciary Committee passed a bill that would require sheriffs to notify residents in a neighborhood who live on a quarter of a mile radius of the convicted felon. We passed a similar bill last year so I feel confident it will be approved by the full House. Although it never made it out of Senate Committee, both chambers have more time to consider legislation this year and I believe they will be able to act on it this session.

Since I'm in Frankfort during the week, I can be reached toll-free at 1-800-372-7181. I hope you will feel free to call me if you would like to discuss these issues, or any that we are debating. In addition to the message line, the General Assembly offers several other toll-free lines to help you keep up with the session. A taped message containing information on legislative committee meeting schedules is available by calling 1-800-896-5225.

Information on the status of each bill we consider will be available on the Bill Status Line, 1-888-829-0021. Those with hearing impairments may leave messages for me by calling the TTY message line at 1-800-896-0305. If you have Internet access you can keep track through the Kentucky Legislature Home Page: <http://www.lrc.state.ky.us>



The Family Room

By: Dr. Roy Don Whitehead

When is the Past Not the Past?

There is a riddle: when is the past not the past? The answer: when it is also the present. If that makes no sense, consider the following scenarios: (All characters are fictitious.)

"You have got to stop bringing up the past," John told Ellen again. "We have to put this behind us and go on. We are never going to get along if you keep bringing up old problems. What is wrong with you that you can't forgive and forget?"

John's words made Ellen wonder if there was something wrong with her. Why couldn't she let go of what had happened? John promised it would never happen again. Why couldn't she believe him?

Two weeks ago John had hit Ellen. It was the first time he had hit her but not the first time he had abused her. Pushing, hair-pulling and holding her down on the bed were John's preferred methods of abuse. These had happened many times before. After the first year of their marriage, John had become abusive and had stopped only for brief times when Ellen threatened to leave.

After two weeks of no abuse, John demanded that Ellen forget the "past." The problem is that the "past," as John called it, was not over. It was still happening and would probably happen again. Two weeks of being a good boy does not mean that the past can be forgotten. John had shown before that he could reform for a few weeks, but what about over a longer period of time? Can he stop abusing Ellen for two months or two years? Ellen cannot forget a past that is still present.

Sam and Rhonda have a different problem. Sam has just discovered that Rhonda has had an affair. This is not the first time. In their ten-year marriage, Rhonda has had at least three affairs of which Sam is aware. He suspects there may have been others.

When Sam confronts Rhonda, she at first denies that anything is happening. When Sam shows her the evidence, she tearfully admits the truth and promises never to do it again. "I don't know what made me do it, Sam," Rhonda cries, "because you are the one I love. I don't want anyone else. Please forgive me and let's get on with our lives."

Sam tries to forget but over the next few weeks the affair still bothers him. Though he says little, Rhonda can sense that he is upset. At first she begs him to forgive her. When she can see he is still bothered, she becomes belligerent. "You have got to let go of the past, Sam. Other couples deal with affairs and go on. Why can't you? I am tired of your bringing this up. I don't want to hear it anymore."

Sam begins to feel bad but he cannot forget what has happened. "Why can't I let go of the past and go on?" he wonders to himself. The reason Sam cannot forget the past is that it may happen again. Even though Rhonda promises never to have another affair, Sam has heard this promise before.

She said the same thing after the other affairs. Just because Rhonda

wants to be faithful to Sam does not mean that she can. To "forget the past" may mean that Sam is setting himself up to be hurt all over again. What Rhonda calls "the past" is still too present to forget.

The past is not the past when it keeps happening. Abuse, affairs, drug use and other problems cannot be easily forgotten without some proof that they are over. The only proof is time: John and Rhonda must prove to their mates that they can keep their promises. This takes time and that means more than just two weeks. They cannot reasonably expect their spouses to forget so quickly.



Noble Shelby C. Stone, of the Truckee-Feez Laurel County Shrine Club, right, presented Danny and Sam Ford of Ford Brothers, Inc., a plaque in appreciation for their donation to the Shriner's Hospital for Children in Lexington. Noble Stone was also presented with a plaque for his outstanding efforts in receiving \$2,000 in donations from area merchants in Madison and Rockcastle Counties. The plaque was presented to him by the Truckee-Feez Laurel County Shrine Club. Shriners of all lodges volunteer their time and efforts in parades and fundraisers, with 100% of all proceeds going directly to the hospital. Noble Stone wishes to thank all area businesses who donated.

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With your vote and support when elected Sheriff of Rockcastle County in May 2002, with God's help we will give new meaning to **Protect** and **Serve** in the Rockcastle Co. Sheriff's Dept.

With more than 15 years in leadership as a Gospel Minister, Pastor, Teacher and Businessman, owning and operating four businesses, one of which was Lake Linville Boat Dock and Campgrounds for seven years. Presently employed as manager of Near New II Auto Center in Berea.

In teaching, also setting the example for years in leadership.

We understand what real leadership is - qualities and virtues like integrity, honesty, commitment and reliability, just to name a few.

With a crystal clear record for more than 20 years and working with youth groups and D.A.R.E. reaching out to kids in Rockcastle and Madison Counties.

When you elect me as your new Sheriff in May 2002, after I take office with the help of several qualified and trained deputies, our pledge to you will be to protect and serve and that we will do **By** the people and for the people.

Watch for future ads in the Mt. Vernon Signal and don't forget it's time for a change!!

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