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Letters

Pelosi appearance panned

June 16, 2009, 7:58PM

Plan does work?

Regarding "Pelosi says any health care plan must halt cost spiral" (Page B5, Saturday), her plan has worked well in Canada and England. The plan does work. Costs are reduced as health care quality is reduced. Of course, care is not available when needed, but costs are much less.

— **William H. Osborne**, *Houston*

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View of a protest

As an up-close and personal observer of the protest rally in honor of Nancy Pelosi's visit to Houston, I found the behavior of both sides of the issue quite interesting. As far as I could tell, the protesters were peaceful and did not attempt to block the entry of anyone going into the Wortham, even when some of them had to pass through the crowd of protesters to reach the cordoned-off area leading up to the front doors. While the protesters held signs depicting Speaker Pelosi with a growing Pinocchio nose and other images and slogans marking their disagreement with her policies, the worst that can be said about them is that they booed and shouted things like, "Pelosi should resign" and "Pelosi

lied." For the most part, the folks going into the theater were equally well behaved. Most of them seemed somewhat amused, smiling and waving and taking pictures of the protesters. Some even strutted their stuff, a bit as if they were on the red carpet at the Academy Awards. Others just strolled straight ahead, not looking right or left.

Then there were the others. A few entering the theater to hear Pelosi deemed it necessary to exhibit obscene gestures with both hands, arms held high, to the crowd along with mouthing or shouting the accompanying words to that gesture. As a woman, I am sad to say that most of these low-class exhibitors were women. I just find that interesting coming from those who like to portray themselves as fair-minded, tolerant and right.

— **Mary Lou Boggus**, *Missouri City*

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Turnout small

Well, Nancy Pelosi was not very well received in Houston — only around 600 (the Chronicle's estimate, which is probably overestimated) in a city and surrounding area of 3 million to 4 million people. We have dignitaries come to Houston quite often, and there is nothing in the Chronicle. Pelosi (remember, the CIA lied to her) gets a huge layout, story and picture. How can someone with such little integrity, honesty, and no devotion to her country be so well received?

— **M. Yvonne Blankenship**, *Houston*

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Dodged crowd

Nancy Pelosi showed how cowardly she is when she chose to slip into the Wortham Center instead of using the front door like a normal person. If she had used the front door, she would have been met by a couple of hundred patriotic Americans who gathered to express their displeasure with her, the president and their party.

Pelosi and her dishonest, corrupt cohorts in Washington are destroying the country piece by piece. If they are not stopped, our grandchildren and great-grandchildren will be nothing but slaves to the federal government.

— **John Anders**, *Houston*

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Patients kept in the dark

Loren Steffy's column on the risk that health care insurance will fail to protect us from catastrophic economic losses ("Insured but not covered," Page D1, Sunday) was right on, but he could have gone even further. More fundamental than the limitations of health care insurance is the fact that we patients never know what the cost of our care is going to be ahead of time. This is equivalent to ordering from a menu that has no prices. I have good health care insurance, but when I had major surgery last spring, I could not tell within \$10,000 what my share of the medical cost was going to be until the bills cascaded in

while I was recovering. Just as we patients are frustrated by ordering from a menu without prices, our frustration is compounded by not knowing whether we actually need the procedure. For example, angioplasties are heavily oversold for patients with stable angina, and informed consent practices often fail to communicate to patients what the risks and gains are from a procedure. I hope health care reform will give patients some fundamental rights so that they can choose doctors, hospitals and procedures intelligently. This will be real reform. Playing smoke-and-mirrors with health insurance is like putting a Band-Aid over a malignant tumor.

— **John T. James**, *Houston*

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Shameful relics

Regarding "Perry signs state schools bill; Law overhauls system, which has seen neglect, abuse and deaths" (Page B1, Friday), a basic understanding of civil rights leads to the conclusion that state schools warehousing people with developmental disabilities throughout Texas have outlasted their questionable utility; they are a shameful relic of failed public policy and outdated attitudes toward people with disabilities. Even with newly signed legislation to improve conditions, the conditions of the institutions will remain deplorable and will continue to be a glaring example of badly spent money. The facts remain. Institutions warehousing people with disabilities, in Texas and across the country, are the focus of

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failed inspections, horrendous findings letters that detail substandard care, class action lawsuits and decertifications. There are many other existing and proposed initiatives that support deinstitutionalization, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, the New Freedom Initiatives, Olmstead Plans, The Lifespan Respite Care Act, Expanding the Promise for Individuals with Autism Act, Pathways to Independence Act and the Family and Workplace Balancing Act, to name a few. The institutional bias is not reflective of American attitudes; people want to stay in their homes and communities, regardless of disability at any age. Lobbyists for unions and facility-based care have for years drowned out mainstream America.

— **Robert Stack**, *Community Options Inc., Dallas*

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Taxpayers on hook again

In response to “Up to 800 Galveston homes up for buyout; Federal grants to aid Ike victims who can’t rebuild” (Page A1, Saturday), I felt compelled to write in an attempt to gain some understanding. I pay more than \$600 a year for flood insurance and over \$1,700 a year for all other coverage, including wind, on my home. Then, I guess as a taxpayer, I am asked to also pay for those homeowners who choose to gamble by carrying no similar coverage. I would sincerely appreciate an explanation from the Chronicle or from my elected representatives as to how this system is considered fair. Also, what happens when the next big storm hits Beach Town and the luxurious new high rises on East Beach in Galveston,

destroying them and the beach. Do taxpayers get to pay for them as well?

— **Doug Smith**, *Houston*

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