

NEWSLETTER

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HEALTH CARE POLITICS

No matter what side of the aisle you would sit on if elected, all parents have an unprecedented opportunity at this moment in history to get involved in health care debates and politics.

Where I stand: I firmly believe all Americans should have health insurance, especially children. To have millions of uninsured children getting only episodic health care or none at all is a national disgrace. I appreciate that we must find a way to pay for health care but what upsets me is that we don't seem to have the collective will to change and improve the present health care system simply because it is the right thing to do.

I just returned from Europe. What is happening in America is always of great interest to Europeans. They are well-informed, watch American TV, and all the local papers seem to cover American news. A tour guide I spoke with in Germany said, "I don't understand why your country doesn't have health care!" She went on to say, "I am really baffled by the fact that you don't trust your government. My parents lived under Hitler, my uncles lived under the communist rule in East Germany. Those were governments you couldn't trust. But you have a wonderful government! I agree with her.

I hope that all parents will keep themselves informed, get involved to the extent they can, AND talk to their children about what is going on. Kids today need to be gently prodded to take an interest in government and politics. Parents should be the first prodders.

In addition to modeling your INTEREST (you excitedly talk back to the TV because the person you disagree with is saying something you know isn't true) and INVOLVEMENT (you take your age-appropriate kids to meetings with you) there are two other things to do.

WATCH TV NEWS WITH YOUR CHILDREN. Switch back and forth between opposing channels so you get all perspectives. Talk about what is true and what is staged. Give the First Amendment a plug by pointing out that EVERYBODY has the right to speak whether we agree with them or not. Discuss the philosophies of each political party. Look things up together on the web or in a library, things like how health care is funded in other countries.

SUGGEST PROJECTS for older children to do on their own, maybe tied in with school work. If a paper on any subject is due, perhaps health care can be the topic.

Kids today are sophisticated because of the internet but they may be ignorant about how their country works. Fill in the gaps.

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