

**BULLY PULPIT**

**Senior care**

I was thinking about a fun trip I took about 10 years ago to Seattle, Wash. – and with it the changes in the lives of the women I went with.

At that time, the biggest difference was that we were all healthy, our parents were living productive lives in their own homes, and we were able to travel without worrying about who is taking care of mom or dad.

Now, several in my group of friends have lost one or more of their parents, the parent that is living is ill enough that life revolves around taking care of them, and/or my friends themselves have health issues that are life changing.

The older I get, the more respect I have for indigenous people of the Old West who traveled in bands of people, lived by their family members, and everyone took care of everyone else in food preparation, food gathering and overall care.

Now, life-styles have changed so much in our United States that there is no longer a nuclear family structure like they had in Dances With Wolves or other films depicting Native American lives. Honestly, it would make life simpler, in a way, if life was such that our aging parents could be taken care of at home without fear of losing their homes and the care-taker of losing their job due to time issues.

I'm fortunate, my dad is relatively healthy, but facing the decline all human beings face with advanced age. We have begun the in-depth look at how to face taking care of him and not losing everything in the meanwhile.

My step-mother passed a little over two years ago. The nursing home cost \$8,900 each month for the care she received; she lived two years. That equated to roughly \$213,600 in just nursing home costs; because God was good and with the circumstances of their marriage, dad was able to handle the cost with help from the state.

Now, enter my dad's age and needs. He doesn't have the same situation my step-mom had and assisted living has been priced at \$4,800 each month.

Our family, like millions of other families and some of my friends, is looking at how to handle that cost and still have something left when Jesus takes dad home to heaven.

One friend of mine splits shifts with family members to give her mom 24-hour care; it's a hardship on all families in the circle – but they've chosen to handle it that way to hopefully have something left in the end.

Other friends have family members that have been in nursing homes for years; each circumstance is different, but the reality of huge costs for care to either the family or the state is there.

Theseniorlist.com reported, "Over 1.2 million people across the nation live in nearly 15,000 Medicare- and Medicaid-certified nursing homes.

"While the overall occupancy rates of these facilities decreased during the pandemic, a decrease that has held strong over the past couple of years, nursing homes still represent a vital source of housing and care for a large number of seniors.

As of 2025, there are 14,742 federally certified nursing facilities in the U.S.

Between 2015 and 2025, the number of federally certified nursing facilities decreased by 6 percent.<sup>4</sup>

The average monthly cost for a private room is \$10,646 per month and \$9,277 for a semi-private room.<sup>5</sup>

In 2023, 37 percent of long-term institutional care costs were paid for out-of-pocket, and Medicaid paid for 44 percent.<sup>6</sup>

The 2025 reconciliation law (passed on July 4, 2025) is expected to reduce \$911 billion of federal Medicaid spending over the next 10 years. This could have implications for nursing facilities."

Interesting to me is the next bit of information on average nursing care per day. The article continued, "Residents receive an average of 3.85 hours of nursing care per day."<sup>10</sup>

This includes an average of 0.87 hours of LPN care, 0.68 hours of RN care, and 2.3 hours of nurse aide care per day.<sup>11</sup>

From 2015 to 2025, the average hours of nursing care that residents received declined from 4.13 hours to 3.85 hours per resident each day (7 percent)."

The 3.85 hours of care per day puts new light on bringing in-home care in; the government is shy on paying for much care, though the cost is so much less to leave someone in their own home.

In my dad's case, he was honorably discharged from the U.S. Air Force and has VA benefits. Even with those, in his case, they only pay for 9-12 hours of in-home care a week. That leaves a lot of time that we have to pay for a private agency to assist him – hours that I, as the only caretaker, need filled for his care.

I write this pulpit only for the fact that the care system for our senior citizens is expensive and not well-funded leaving much of the burden on families. It's tragic for some when the resources are not there; it leaves our seniors in a dangerous position and puts the state in the driver's seat.



## ICE doesn't need a second court – it already used one

**WASHINGTON** – U.S. Senator Roger Marshall, M.D. (R-Kansas), published an op-ed in the Salina Post, writing about the truth behind how ICE enforces immigration law and defending the agency's use of administrative warrants as a long-established legal practice.

America has always been the land of opportunity. People come here from every corner of the world chasing the values that we hold so dearly. That is something we should be proud of – but being a welcoming nation doesn't mean we stop being a nation of laws.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's most recent data, more than 51

million foreign-born individuals live in the United States. That number reflects America's enduring promise. Yet within that total, an estimated 15.4 million people are here illegally – living without legal status or authorization.

American citizens deserve a government that puts them first – no U.S. citizen should be asked to play by the rules while others face no rules at all.

The real question isn't whether we should enforce our immigration laws – of course, we should. The question is whether we are enforcing them legally, fairly and with the integrity the American people expect from their govern-

ment.

Democrats in Washington are calling for sweeping changes to how Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrests and removes people who are in the United States illegally. The argument sounds reasonable on the surface: shouldn't a judge sign every warrant before ICE can act? But when you look at how the current system actually works, the case for changing it falls apart.

First, it helps to understand that there are two kinds of warrants. Criminal warrants – the kind you see on TV – are signed by a judge before police can act. Administrative warrants are different:

they are used in civil proceedings, like tax enforcement or immigration, where the government is not charging someone with a crime. ICE uses administrative warrants – and federal courts have upheld that practice for decades.

Here's the truth about how ICE operates: They don't show up on a hunch. In many cases, when ICE serves someone with a removal warrant, that person has already had their full day in court. They appeared before a federal immigration judge. They made their case. They had the chance to appeal. The court ordered them removed. That day in court  
**SEE ICE, A3**

## Gen Z and the case for fixer upper

**BY TOM PURCELL**

Generation Z should consider buying a fixer upper.

Houses are expensive these days and mortgage rates are high. It's no wonder that only 27 percent of Zoomers, 28 or younger, own homes, whereas nearly 45 percent of baby boomers did at the same age.

Zoomers should consider following my path.

Thirty years ago, when I quit corporate America to become a freelance writer, money was tight – so I bought a fixer upper cheap.

It took three days for my father and I to tear off the

old bathroom tile, replaster the walls and put up a vinyl tub surround.

We thought we were home free – until we got to the toilet.

You see, the bolts that secure the toilet to the floor had both broken. I raced to the hardware store to buy a new bolt kit.

We spent 90 minutes getting the new bolts in place – only to discover they were too short.

"Son of a !!" said my father.

"The idiots gave us the wrong bolts!" I said.

I raced to the hardware store for longer bolts. It took two hours to remove the bolts we'd just installed, then attach the

longer ones.

Finally, we secured the toilet – but the wax goop, which seals the toilet to the sewage pipe, wasn't thick enough, causing water to leak all over the recently laid tiles.

"Son of a !!" said my father.

"The idiots gave us the wrong goop!" I said, then I raced back to the hardware store.

Our third attempt to secure the toilet succeeded – until we attempted to reattach the water fittings.

To reattach the water fittings, you must wedge your body between the tub and the toilet. Then you must screw the water-line bolt, made of metal, into a pipe coming from the toilet that is made of plastic. But they won't screw  
**SEE FIXER UPPER, A3**

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