

Metro&Iowa



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Regular folks shock jittery politicians

Wow, take a few days off and old men in seed corn caps and young mothers pushing strollers run amok, turning a quiet summer into a politician's idea of hell on Earth.

And these public servants who have dedicated their lives to public service for the good of the public apparently didn't see it coming.

This particular hell? Citizens are actually beginning to pay attention to legislation. Some are even reading the blasted bills and asking questions. Talk about unfair. Scariest of all, they're not satisfied anymore with the usual drivel shoveled back at them. They are demanding accountability.

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Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a California Democrat, said these so-called "protesters" are showing up carrying swastikas. Interesting, because nobody has actually been spotted sporting a swastika. Oh, well. Just to be safe, she wrote last week that loudly challenging the distinguished senators and representatives is "un-American."

Yeah, yeah, said Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid of Nevada. These people are "evil-mongers," a term he says he invented.

And Iowa's Sen. Charles Grassley, the top Republican on the Senate committee writing health reform legislation, is in the middle of it all. He is negotiating with Democrats, and that has angered those on the extreme right. Makes him a traitor to the cause, they're saying. These are the same people who would think Jesus Christ and Abraham Lincoln lack purity.

The left is mad at Grassley because he said "people have a right to fear" what is in the legislation being considered in the U.S. House of Representatives. He's saying to look at other countries with government mandates. It inevitably leads to prioritizing health care, based on who is worth spending the money on.

Grassley said it might well happen here, hence his quote about being concerned the government

eventually might have the power to "pull the plug on Grandma."

The left went bonkers. Eyeballs actually flew out of commentators' heads on MSNBC. There was a demand he be censured — it's uncertain by whom — and he was called nasty names. Editorial writers and columnists shook their fists. The White House is mad at him. Well-meaning (yeah, right) observers are passing the word that Iowa's senior senator may be having lots of senior moments. Going round the bend, as it were.

It all brings to mind a marvelous and slightly vulgar quote, written in several ways over the years. It applies here and now, because Grassley is, indeed, "pissing off all the right people."

And so are the folks ruining the politicians' summers.

Don't believe it?

A Washington Post writer says they show up at town hall meetings "wearing T-shirts, baseball caps, promotional polo shirts and sundresses with bra straps sliding down their arm," suggesting their choice in clothes shows them to be dolts. A Time magazine columnist wrote that the town hall events where people are speaking up are a "celebration of ignorance and misinformation." A has-been author went on TV a couple of days ago and said the oafish opponents of these particular health care proposals probably

"didn't read much Edmund Burke when they were young."

This must be devastating stuff for the working stiffs of the world to deal with, being the butt of fashion and literary jokes at snazzy media soirees.

The same things, and worse, are being said about Grassley, and he too seems to be standing up under the pressure.

He says any health care reform should "achieve the goals of driving down health care inflation that's straining family budgets and employers big and small, making insurance coverage more accessible, and not piling on the deficit."

A statement issued by Grassley's office said he doesn't support a government-run program because it's a pathway to a government-run system. And he thinks that is something for you, me and especially Grandma to fear. Or at least be concerned about.

Grassley has been around a long while. He knows it might cost him when he comes up for reelection in 2010.

He might end up getting only 65 percent of the vote instead of the usual 67 or 68 percent.

In the meantime, the legislation is being moderated, because the politicians are listening to the hooligans and louts in the T-shirts and baseball camps.

It must be driving them crazy in Manhattan and Georgetown.