

Wicker, Hyde-Smith challenge new liver transplant policy that would affect Mississippi adversely

U.S. Senators Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) and Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-Miss.) are challenging a new policy that could divert livers donated for transplant in Mississippi to other regions of the country.

Wicker and Hyde-Smith are among 22 Senators who signed a bipartisan letter to Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar that questions actions by the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) in developing a new national liver distribution policy.

The senators outlined their concerns that “the negative effects of this new policy could be most severe for rural, low-income populations.”

The new model would allow donated livers to be sent to organ recipients up to 500 miles away from a donor hospital before becoming available to local and in-state recipients, thus diverting

livers toward larger metropolitan cities. It effectively penalizes regions like the South and Midwest which have higher rates of donation than other regions in the United States.

“We look forward to better understanding how the Department will assure Americans that livers are fairly distributed across the country,” the senators wrote.

The University of Mississippi Medical Center, which has the only liver transplant program in Mississippi, has excelled under the previous policy that based transplant candidate selection in relation to where the donors lived.

Other concerns listed in the letter include:

- The extent to which OPTN considered adverse effects on low-income and rural communities;
- Why the plan rewards poor-performing organ procurement organizations;

- Claims that OPTN did not consider all public comments; and

- Assertions that OPTN did not give sufficient consideration to increased costs under the new plan.

“These fundamental missteps make us question the OPTN process and the oversight the Department of Health and Human Services is conducting,” the senators wrote.

The letter, led by Senators Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) and Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), was also signed by: Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), and Senators Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.), John Boozman (R-Ark.), Tom Cotton (R-Ark.), Joni Ernst (R-Iowa), Lindsay Graham (R-S.C.), Josh Hawley (R-Mo.), Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.), Doug Jones (D-Ala.), James Lankford (R-Okla.), Jerry Moran (R-Kan.), Rand Paul (R-Ky.), Gary Peters (D-Mich.), Pat Roberts (R-Kan.), Tim Scott (R-S.C.), Richard Shelby (R-Ala.), Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), and Todd Young (R-Ind.).

Editor: There are more hands that heap than hands that sweep

Yes, Mr. Pat Barrett Jr., how indeed do the perpetrators continue with blinders on, oblivious to the trash strewn streets, parking lots and roads? In your letter last week you made some relevant points.

It is certainly a weekly chore in my yard in Durant, on one of the most traveled city streets, to dispose of beer bottles, liquor bottles, Black and Mild wrappers, chip bags, candy wrappers, condom wrappers, used condoms, among other trash, strewn around. And no, there was no party at my house.

This issue is a continual problem all over the county, so it is not conditional to just Lexington. The Broken Windows Theory, a law enforcement term, describes that any visible signs of crime, anti-social behavior, civil disorder (i.e. littering) will only lead to more such behavior.

How long does it take for one broken window in one abandoned building to become all broken windows? One cigarette butt on the ground to become a heap?

It is past time to change this mentality. I believe in the old adage, “Charity starts at home.” A former mayor of Durant, Robert Johnson, once said during a board meeting, “It’s not the city’s responsibility to pick up in front of your yard.” That’s exactly right, so I will continue in the mean time to de-litter my property best I’m able.

the walls currently in place, and the immense challenges we face at our border, it is unfortunate the President’s request for additional walls and security has sparked such a partisan divide. A return to bipartisan support for enhanced border security would go a long way toward improving our politics and protecting our nation.

replace approximately 120 miles of walls in fiscal years 2017 and 2018. Congress met these requests through appropriations bills, passed with bipartisan support. As that work nears completion, more must be done to address a growing crisis at the southern border.

This year, 50 percent more gang members have been arrested at the border than last year and overall apprehensions are up more than 30 percent. U.S. Customs and Border Patrol has also seized 115 percent more fentanyl, a deadly synthetic opioid, and 75 percent more methamphetamine this year. Caravans of hundreds of migrants have attempted to storm border crossings and enter the United States by overwhelming our border patrol. Although our nation is welcoming and compassionate to those who seek a better life and respect our laws, we cannot allow this level of chaos and lawlessness in our country.

Given the effectiveness of

Wicker: 5G Technology Presents Opportunities for Mississippi

New Networks Could Enable Improved Connections and Innovations for Rural America

The fifth generation of high-speed wireless networks, commonly known as 5G, is expected to increase data speeds up to 100 times faster than today’s mobile technology. This improvement will not only make our phones and internet-connected products run faster, but also revolutionize the way information is shared between people, businesses, and devices.

In the United States, 5G networks are projected to result in the creation of more

I’m proud of my friend Jim Thompson, director of library services at Holmes Community College and the current Holmes County Chamber of Commerce president, for his efforts in organizing a Keep Holmes County Beautiful chapter. He and his team of VOLUNTEERS have a heap of work to accomplish. So efforts are being established to tackle this problem; however, the trash was not all thrown out overnight, neither will it be picked up over night.

I often wonder about “industrial prospects” traversing our county, usually in secret, and what their thoughts are. Here’s a clue, it’s not good.

In answer to your two questions, who is doing the litter and why?

I know that I must look at myself first, before turning to my neighbor. Am I doing everything that I can at my home, business, church, school, place of employment, to mitigate litter? Then I would turn to the people around me and see who is contributing to the problem. A 2009 report from Keep America Beautiful said during a study of observing locations for high litter traffic, the majority of offenders were young. Charity starts at home, if children aren’t explicitly told by responsible parents, grandparents, legal guardian, whomever, “Littering is bad, put your trash in a bin not on the ground,” well there is little hope there. Those same

parents certainly have to practice what they preach.

As to a “Why?” In the same study, the amount of litter already present impacted the behavior of people littering to an even greater degree. The more visible litter on the ground, the more people want to litter or rather don’t care about putting it where it goes, in the trash can. An alternative why, from me personally, people are lazy, ignorant and just don’t care. Take your pick.

You mentioned a deterrent in your letter, photographing people who litter and publishing it. I’m not sure how effective that would be. I’ve seen grown men on many occasions, throughout this county, peeing on walls on the sides of convenient stores in clear view of the nearby highway in broad daylight. Certainly isn’t any shame there is it?

Maybe our county supervisors, municipal aldermen, mayors, elected officials and community leaders have some ideas. All are welcome to submit letters to this publication at hcherald@gmail.com.

On a side note to truck owners who do this, throwing your loose trash in the bed of your truck then turning a blind eye when it flies out while driving down the highway is just plain ignorance.

**Matthew Breazeale is the editor of the Holmes County Herald and can be reached at hcherald@gmail.com.*

THE WICKER REPORT

By: United States Senator Roger Wicker



Wicker Recounts Past Bipartisan Support for Border Barriers

Walls and Fences Have Been Embraced by Both Parties for Decades

The debate over funding for a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border has invoked partisan passions and strong language. Democratic leaders have dismissed the President’s proposed wall as “irresponsible,” “not serious,” and “wasteful.” Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., went so far as to say a border wall would be “immoral.”

Today’s charged rhetoric contradicts decades of bipartisan support for enhanced border security including physical barriers. Congress has funded walls and fences along the southern border under presidents of both parties. Until recently, these efforts were widely considered necessary to defend our homeland and were not controversial.

History of America’s Border Wall

For most of American history, the border with Mexico has been secured only by natural barriers. By the early 1990s, the flow of undocumented immigrants and illegal drugs across the Mexican border required a greater response.

In 1991, the U.S. Border Patrol under President George H.W. Bush began to erect the first physical barriers between San Diego and Tijuana. Many of these original border walls were built from scrap metal leftover from Vietnam War-era helicopter landing pads.

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, the border patrol continued to build physical barriers along high-traffic areas. These efforts were supported by both chambers of Congress under the leadership of both parties, and by three presidents – two Republicans and one Democrat.

In 2006, Congress and President George W. Bush enacted the “Secure Fence Act” with strong bipartisan support, including 26 Senate Democrats. The bill authorized billions of dollars to build physical barriers and secure the border through technology.

In 2013, all 54 Democrats then serving in the U.S. Senate voted for an immigration reform package, which proposed \$46 billion in border security and added 700 miles of border fencing. This bill did not pass the House of Representatives because of other concerns, but it nevertheless put Senate Democrats on record for supporting enhanced border security structures.

Walls Work

It turns out the physical barriers actually worked. It is well documented that the San Diego, El Paso, Tucson, and Yuma walls reduced illegal border crossings in each of these sectors by at least 90 percent.

The Trump Administration built on this success by obtaining additional resources to construct, improve, or

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