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23 December 2014

Mr. Mike Constantino  
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board  
525 West Jefferson, 2nd Floor  
Springfield, Illinois 62761

Re: Project 14-043

Dear Mr. Constantino,

Attached is a letter to the editor published in the Belleville News Democrat on December 21 from Mr. Kevin Hutchinson, Executive Director of the St. Clair County Public Health Department, in which he states that the St. Clair County Health Department is not opposed to HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital's replacement project. We share this letter to clarify any misinformation that might exist regarding the health department's position.

On November 13, St. Elizabeth Hospital representatives met with Mr. Hutchinson and other county health department representatives to provide them with details on how our replacement hospital would enhance access to health care for county residents and strengthen safety net services for patients from across the region.

Sincerely,

Joshua Campos  
Manager, Strategic Planning  
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# LETTERS

## Can't support two hotels

Well, it looks like we are going to give away some more taxpayer money to an unknown developer so he can build two hotels, etc., in Belleville. Are you kidding me? Who in their right mind thinks there is enough traffic-business to support two new hotels in Belleville?

This is just another theft of taxpayer money by a cowardly, unknown developer supported by a bunch of spineless politicians. And these politicians are not even proud enough to call themselves Democrats; they are now independents instead of Good Government. And the independents who ran for local offices in the last few years are not proud of calling themselves Republicans.

Speaking of cowards and not being proud, how about that federal government of ours? Telling the world how unjust and immoral we are for waterboarding a couple of terrorists, but not a single word about our legalized killing of thousands of innocent human beings through abortions. Again another group of spineless politicians who have no idea what immoral means.

This guy who built Obamacare might be right: We, the people, are stupid. We just continue to elect the same cowards at every level of government.

It's time to wake up and take back our country. It's time for every American to get out and vote in every election every year. Let those politicians know we are in charge, not them.

Hal Inabinet  
Belleville

## Grandfather, where are you?

For 30 years, I paid into Illinois' Teacher Retirement System while the state failed to match my contri-

butions.

Now, because Illinois is underfunding all state pensions by \$100 billion, there is a bill before the courts to reduce my COLA (cost of living adjustment). Has no one ever heard of grandfather clauses?

OK, I'll go one better and forgo a raise for three years if all the other retirees join me and every penny saved is used to reduce the debt. The state Constitution says I don't have to do this, and the courts will back the current COLA despite the state spending millions more on legal fees. I will forgo raises so that all the burden doesn't fall on new teachers.

Can we really expect our students to excel when all the highly qualified college graduates go into the business world to make "big bucks" and completely control their retirement plan?

Forget independent retirement plans. In one year, during the middle of our recent recession, TRS (Teacher Retirement System) earned 22 percent on funds, through volume buying of moderately safe long- and short-term investments. If they had \$1 billion more to invest, Illinois TRS would be number one in the nation.

Can we really expect that even a simple majority of state employees will make safe, long-term investments or, when behind the financial eight ball, take a gamble on high-risk, large-return investments?

Ron Schaefer  
Swansea

## Not opposing St. E's move

In your editorial last Sunday, "Moving St. E's into the future," you incorrectly stated that the St. Clair County Health Department is opposing moving St. Elizabeth's Hospital from Belleville.

Our Oct. 17 letter to the Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review

Board expressed concern that the proposed replacement hospital location will adversely impact the safety net services currently provided by St. Elizabeth's Hospital to the residents of St. Clair County. As I stated to your reporter in the article published Nov. 16, the Health Department neither supports nor opposes St. Elizabeth's Hospital's request to the state board for a certificate of need.

Your Nov. 7 editorial, "Can safety net survive a move?", more accurately conveys the position of our department. You stated: "The county's concerns do not necessarily mean that the state should deny St. E's application; however, the state does need to ensure that the county Health Department's concerns are considered and addressed before action on the hospital's application."

We support a strong health care system that provides safety net services needed by medically underserved and vulnerable populations. Our goal was to review the application and its impact on essential services to all residents of St. Clair County.

Kevin D. Hutchison  
Executive director, St. Clair County Health Department  
Belleville

## Victory may be fleeting

What happened last election? A lot or little depending on your view.

Despite electing Bruce Rauner as governor of Illinois, not one seat changed in the state assembly. This does not bode well for any initiative Rauner may envision.

We have sent Mike Bost to represent us in the U.S. House. He has a chance to represent our interests and put the nation ahead of the rancor of politics. As far as changing anything, control of the House has not changed.

The U.S. Senate is interesting. The pundits who eat and breathe politics predicted the turn more than a year ago. Those pundits also predict another turnover in 2016 when the same forces that worked against the Democrats will then work in their favor. Despite their majority in the Senate, not much will change as the GOP remains a fractured party. What was red before stayed red. What was blue stayed blue.

The most interesting facet of the election was the shifting trends. New Hampshire and Virginia are trending or strongly leaning blue. The states that are predictably blue control 257 electoral votes. The predictably red states control 149 electoral votes. If New Hampshire and Virginia go solidly blue, that puts the Democrats at the 270 electoral votes needed to elect the next president, unless the GOP can field a candidate who can appeal to the moderate middle.

What happened? The GOP alienated large blocs of the electorate for a temporary gain. Both parties moved away from the moderate middle.

Michael R. Sweeney  
Caseville