

Guest column

Catch prostate cancer early and save lives

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The American Cancer Society reports that the number of cases of advanced prostate cancer has been rising by 5% each year since 2014. Recently, I have been seeing several men who have developed advanced prostate cancer, despite being concerned about their well-being and diligent with yearly primary care doctor visits; these men unfortunately never had a PSA screening. I feel a strong sense of responsibility to share this important message as a public service announcement, especially as we approach Father's Day, a time when we celebrate the men in our lives. It's crucial for all men to consider getting prostate cancer screening.

Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer among men and the third leading cause of cancer-related deaths. The good news is that it can be effectively treated or monitored, improving the chances of survival and reducing the need for aggressive interventions, if it is detected early.

One of the key tools in the fight against prostate cancer is PSA screening, a simple blood test that can make a world of difference. PSA, or prostate-specific antigen, is a protein produced by the prostate gland. Elevated levels of PSA in the blood may indicate the presence of prostate cancer. While PSA screening is not a perfect test, it remains a valuable tool for early detection.

The American Urological Association recommends men between the ages of 55 and 70 undergo annual PSA screening. For men with risk factors for prostate cancer, such as a family history of prostate cancer or having African American ethnicity, screening should start as early as age 40.

Why is early detection so crucial? Prostate cancer often progresses slowly in its early stages, showing few or no symptoms. By the time symptoms become apparent, the cancer may have already spread beyond the prostate, making treatment more challenging. When prostate cancer is caught at an early stage through screening, treatment options are more effective and less invasive. This means a higher likelihood of complete recovery and a better quality of life for those affected.

While it's understandable

that some may feel anxious about undergoing prostate cancer screening, knowledge is power. By educating yourself about the test and its potential benefits, you can make an informed decision. The goal of PSA screening is not to immediately diagnose cancer but to identify those who may benefit from further testing and intervention. In many cases, elevated PSA levels may be due to non-cancerous conditions. Further tests, like an MRI or a biopsy, can help provide a more definitive diagnosis.

It's crucial to acknowledge that prostate cancer is not a one-size-fits-all disease. Every individual's situation is unique, and treatment decisions should be made in consultation with health care professionals. PSA screening results should be considered alongside other factors, such as age, overall health and personal preferences. And not everyone with prostate cancer needs to be treated. Recent studies have demonstrated that many lower risk prostate cancers can be successfully monitored without treatment, a strategy called active surveillance. The goal is to create a personalized health care plan that optimizes outcomes while minimizing risks.

Prostate cancer is a significant health concern that requires attention. PSA screening plays a vital role in the early detection of prostate cancer, allowing for timely intervention and improved outcomes. For men between the ages of 55 and 70, annual screening should be a priority. If you have risk factors, such as a family history of prostate cancer or African American ethnicity, consider starting screening at age 40.

If you are concerned about your prostate and you are between the ages of 40-55 without a known risk factor, ask your doctor for a baseline PSA test. By understanding the importance of regular screenings, you are taking control of your health and increasing the chances of catching prostate cancer at its earliest and most treatable stage. Remember, knowledge and proactive steps can save lives.

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Cartoonist's take



Commentary » S.E. Cupp

Mike Pence's timing is off again

At a spry 64 years old, former Vice President Mike Pence is celebrating

Wednesday was his birthday. It was also the day he formally announced his run for president.

It's a strange and circuitous series of events that led him from a promising future as a GOP rising star to here, polling at 7% among GOP primary voters, filing the paperwork on Monday to run against his former boss, Donald Trump — whose supporters marched on the Capitol just two years ago chanting, "Hang Mike Pence!"

Now Pence hopes to win those same voters, voters who were so loyal to Trump they still blame Pence for failing to help overturn a democratic election.

But it's worse than that. He'll need those voters — Trump supporters who will presumably vote for Trump in the Republican primary — and others, including conservatives whom Trump lost as well as moderates and independents to have a shot at winning.

The 2024 primary and general elections will be a big game of math — who can add, and who still feels content to shrink the base down to its angriest and most aggrieved. (See: front-runners Trump and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis).

I've been open in my cynicism about Pence's prospects, writing that "one doesn't have to look too hard to realize Pence is somewhat stranded out in the political wilderness, without a pathway or a natural constituency to lead him back to relevance."

That's because he's uniquely seen in one way or another as a traitor by most Republicans. Those on the far right think he betrayed Trump, and Never-



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Trump conservatives and center-right moderates think he sold out his principles to carry Trump's water. Who, exactly, is left?

Perhaps 2024 Pence is hoping to resurrect 2014 Pence, who was seen by many as a viable presidential prospect for 2016.

Here was *The Washington Post* in December of 2014, six months before Trump would descend the golden escalator to announce his bid:

"Indiana Gov. Mike Pence has strong ideas about what the next Republican presidential nominee should be like. A 'solutions conservative' with a record of policy reform originating in the states. A candidate versed in foreign affairs who envisions a muscular role for the United States in the world. And someone who is 'relentlessly optimistic' — and capable of attracting new voters to the Republican Party as Ronald Reagan did a generation ago. As it happens, that sounds an awful lot like Mike Pence."

By anyone's standards that's a glowing review of a very conservative deficit hawk and Christian warrior who'd dutifully made his way through Congress to the Indiana Statehouse.

By May of 2015, he announced he wouldn't seek the nomination and instead said he'd seek reelection as governor. In July of 2016 he dropped out of the Indiana race to announce he'd accept the nomination for Trump's vice president.

But imagine if Pence had remained governor through a second term while Trump went off to light the country on fire and betray nearly every conservative tenet Pence had believed in along the way.

From Trump's anti-protectionism to his America First isolationist foreign policy, exploding the debt and deficit and growing the size of government, not to mention Trump's bastardization and squandering of an evangelical base with which Pence was much more aligned, Pence had to shift or dump completely positions that were fundamental to his version of conservatism.

And he obligingly did all of that only so that four years later Trump supporters would call for his death by hanging, and Trump himself would call him a "wimp."

And now, as he looks ahead to 2024, Pence has nothing good to show for those four years of service to anyone who matters. His loyalty to Trump was washed away by MAGA with one decision not to overturn the 2020 election. And his subsequent praise for Trump won't help him win back any conservatives or moderates who want to move past him.

It isn't the first time Pence missed his moment. When first elected to Congress in 2000, the budget hawk was eager to cut spending and shrink government. But he had missed the Republican Revolution — George W. Bush and House Republicans went on to spend trillions on bank bailouts and new entitlement programs.

"I was like the frozen man," Pence said of his timing. "Frozen before the revolution; thawed after it was over. A minuteman who showed up 10 years too late."

Well, he's 10 years too late again. The Mike Pence of 2014 has no chance of winning in 2024.

It makes his decision to run all the more flummoxing. And it certainly makes you wonder what could have been.

Commentary » Clarence Page

Members of Congress find virtue in compromise at last

After four months of political wrangling, eyeball-to-eyeball negotiations and mounting anxiety in both parties about the "debt ceiling," Congress finally found enough common ground to pay its bills. But how long will these good tidings last?

First, it helps to understand just what the debt ceiling is. In mid-April House Speaker Kevin McCarthy explained it like this: "You know, if you gave your child a credit card, and they kept maxing it out to the limit, you wouldn't blindly just raise the limit. You'd change their behavior. The exact same thing is true with our national debt."

That's not quite right. The debt ceiling isn't about putting a limit on your future spending.



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Columnist

It's about paying bills you already owe, such as your credit card statement lists the purchases you have made.

Refusal by McCarthy and his House GOP Republican colleagues in recent months to raise the federal debt ceiling on spending the government already has incurred would be like refusing to pay for what you already owe. If you persisted in this refusal, you'd end up in bankruptcy, or perhaps in jail for fraud.

The debt ceiling has become a pointless and dangerous exercise, as spending constantly exceeds revenue, and the ceiling repeatedly must be raised to avoid default and a financial crisis.

But, as our politics have become more fractious, the looming debt ceiling has climbed to

\$31.4 trillion and poses a threat to our national well-being and the global economy.

Fortunately, with just days to go before the big collapse, the Republican-controlled House overwhelmingly passed a debt ceiling deal forged by McCarthy and President Joe Biden.

The House sent the legislation to the waiting hands of the Democratic-controlled Senate, which gave final approval Thursday and then sent it to Biden to be signed into law.

That was close. But with dedicated lawmakers and their hard-working staffers, agreement came together through compromise. McCarthy and other Republicans were not willing to destroy the economy by forcing a default or imposing job-killing spending cuts. But they were willing to rally the moder-

ates and leave the furthest-right extremists on the sidelines just enough to get the job done.

Not much of substance has changed. There's no default, no cuts in Social Security or Medicaid, a health care program for low-income folks.

Nor was it necessary to make any move as radical as invoking the 14th Amendment to challenge the constitutionality of the debt ceiling, which might have been overturned by the Supreme Court anyway.

And there was no dethroning of McCarthy, who could be vulnerable to any one of his House GOP colleagues, particularly more extreme conservatives.

Taking the longer view, it is easy to see that the debt ceiling bill should never have been necessary. Congress should be able

to money it had already told the Treasury to spend.

The U.S. and global economies should have been spared the anxieties inflamed by tension over a possibly disastrous default that resulted from the legislation's delay.

It also is wrong as a matter of principle for the House Republican majority to use must-pass legislation such as the debt limit law as leverage to extract spending reductions from the White House. In practice, that strategy has produced a modest increase in fiscal responsibility.

Yet, in view of the long-running dysfunction brought on by the hyperpartisan political environment, the passage of the debt ceiling measure represents a major achievement. It shouldn't be so hard for such valuable agreements to be reached.