



Wednesday, May 11, 2011

## Choices for the Senate

***In crafting the state budget, Ohio senators now must stand firm with the governor in facing down the nursing home lobby***

The Ohio Health Care Association is on the warpath. The industry group, which represents nursing homes, is yanking every emotional chain in an effort to reverse \$427 million in funding cuts proposed in the two-year state budget. A ploy taken right out of the Republican "death-panel" playbook against federal health-care reform, the group is running television ads, one of which opens with an elderly patient in a bed and a photo of Gov. John Kasich. The ad ends with someone pulling a plug, a flat-lining EKG monitor and an appeal to call state senators before it's too late.

The demagoguery was reprehensible when the Republicans did it, and it is reprehensible now.

Nursing homes have been the default option for decades for seniors who need long-term care in Ohio. The state relies more heavily and spends more of its long-term care funds on nursing homes than do most states. The result has been years of overbuilding, and an industry with much political clout. The number of beds in the state ranks above the national average. Florida, with 30 percent more senior citizens than Ohio, has 15 percent fewer nursing home beds. Several studies of long-term care in Ohio have noted the lack of balance between institutional care and options for home and community-based care, which seniors prefer and which is less expensive by far.

Read the rest of the editorial here: <http://www.ohio.com/editorial/opinions/121618904.html>

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