

EDITORIAL: Saving their bacon

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The fact that Democrats refuse to compromise with the White House in the battle to expand a federal health insurance program for children indicates just how dedicated they are to ensuring kids don't go without medical care. Right?

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On Tuesday, Sen. Tom Coburn, the Oklahoma Republican who has raised the ire of his colleagues by highlighting budget pork, was at it again. This time, even The Washington Post noted that his stunt "was particularly revealing."

Sen. Coburn proposed an amendment to a major health spending bill that prohibited lawmakers from funding their pet projects until "all children in the U.S. under the age of 18 years are insured by a private or public health insurance plan."

Among the earmarks potentially on the chopping block: \$500,000 for a Virtual Herbarium in New York; \$400,000 for the Figge Art Museum in Iowa; and \$500,000 for "field experiences" on the Chesapeake Bay.

"It seems to me the American public might want to ask why are you earmarking special money for special projects when you have a chance to make sure it will go toward children and really solving the problem?" the Post quotes Sen. Coburn saying, "So this is going to be a tough vote. Kids versus my political career. Kids versus my political power. Kids versus my political earmarks. We're going to see. We're going to get to see what the real priorities of the Senate are."

This little piggy or health care for children? We don't have to tell you which option the Senate chose.

The vote was 68-26 in favor of pork. Only two Democrats sided with Sen. Coburn.

Nor were his fellow senators much amused with being forced to choose between spending \$400 million on pet projects or re-directing the money to buy health insurance for children.

The Post reports that while Sen. Coburn was speaking on the floor, other senators did their best to disrupt him, busying "themselves in noisy conversations on the Senate floor."

Behaving, in fact ... like children.