

## Reopen discussion of repairs on East Conway Road

To the editor:

Let's look back when the residents of East Conway Road and Green Hill Road had been complaining about the conditions of these two roads. These complaints prompted discussion with our state representatives over the crumbling asphalt. Included in those discussions was the cost to fix the entire stretch of both roads at an estimated cost of \$12 million for 12 miles of road. When the discussions ended we were told that there were no funds available. Although the comments of no funding were made, the state found a way to come up with some funds to fix a portion of East Conway Road which was not as bad as other parts of the two roads in question. The repair to East Conway Road from Route 302 on through to Autumn Road was in my opinion a gesture only to appease the local area residents.

Now, let's jump to Oct 4 of this year. The House Republican leader Gene Chandler (R-Bartlett) offered some

comments about the "\$76 million surplus from the fiscal year 2013." This was part of the budget passed in 2011. Um, that was the before the residents made complaints over the deterioration of East Conway and Green Hill Roads in 2012. At that same time we were also told that there were no funds for the foreseeable future and all monies were already allocated for other projects. But now, it would seem that there had to be knowledge of upcoming funds.

Gene Chandler also states "Even with the good news, we mustn't rush into a spending spree. We will have a thorough discussion on how to best apply these surplus funds that will best serve the needs of our state, its people and our fiscal health."

Well I say we need to reopen the discussion over more repairs to East Conway Road and Green Hill Road. The fiscal health of East Conway and Green Hill Roads are just as important.

Daniel Bacon  
Center Conway

## Limit money to be spent on election campaigns

To the editor:

In his column, Mark Hounsell correctly identified the root cause of the problems with our government. That problem is the small number of rich people who hand-pick and fund the election of our representatives. I suggest, however, that Mark proposes the wrong solution.

Our goal should be: to have a Congress that represents the will of the people, and is elected by the majority of an informed citizenry. A constitutional amendment specifying legislative branch term limits does not accomplish that goal.

Term limits would simply allow the rich and powerful more opportunities to exercise the power of money to place inexperienced and easily influenced people into the Congress. There are many good people in Congress who have represented their constituents well, and their constituents should not be denied the opportunity to return them to Congress. To do so would be contrary to "the will of the people."

Rather than trying to limit the terms of the people who represent us, we should concentrate on limiting the money that is spent to elect those people. Unlimited campaign spending by a few does not promote "the will of the people," or "dependence on the people alone" (James Madison), it only promotes the will of a small minority who are financially able to drown out the "people." Several local towns have attempted

to pass resolutions addressing the need for a constitutional amendment allowing campaign finance reform, but only Conway was successful. There is still an effort to have town citizenry speak out on the issue of money in politics.

While not abandoning that solution, I am also in favor of some method of public financing of elections that would promote individual support for candidates. Laurence Lessig has proposed a method of public financing that would give each voter a voucher worth \$50, which they could then contribute to a candidate, or split with candidates, of their choice. Candidates that agree to accept these vouchers would also have to agree not to take contributions from any other source. Without a constitutional amendment, this might be the most practical and quickest solution to the problem of the corrupting influence of money in politics, but it would still not prevent the rich contributor from pouring huge sums into the electoral system. For that, a constitutional amendment is still necessary.

If the public financing system worked well enough, it could counter the ever increasing contributions from the small few that influence our legislators. Wouldn't it be nice to have our legislative candidates come to us, the people, in order to get our support through a voucher system?

Ken McKenzie  
Eatonsville

## Negotiations in order before debt ceiling is raised

To the editor:

An observation regarding the political side show in Washington.

From the point of compassion, health care is needed for all Americans. As the Medicare prescription drug plan under President Bush worked out the bugs in the administration of the plan, so too will this. Overall entitlements need to be reformed along with the tax codes. Washington rejected the Simpson/Bowles plan and could not make

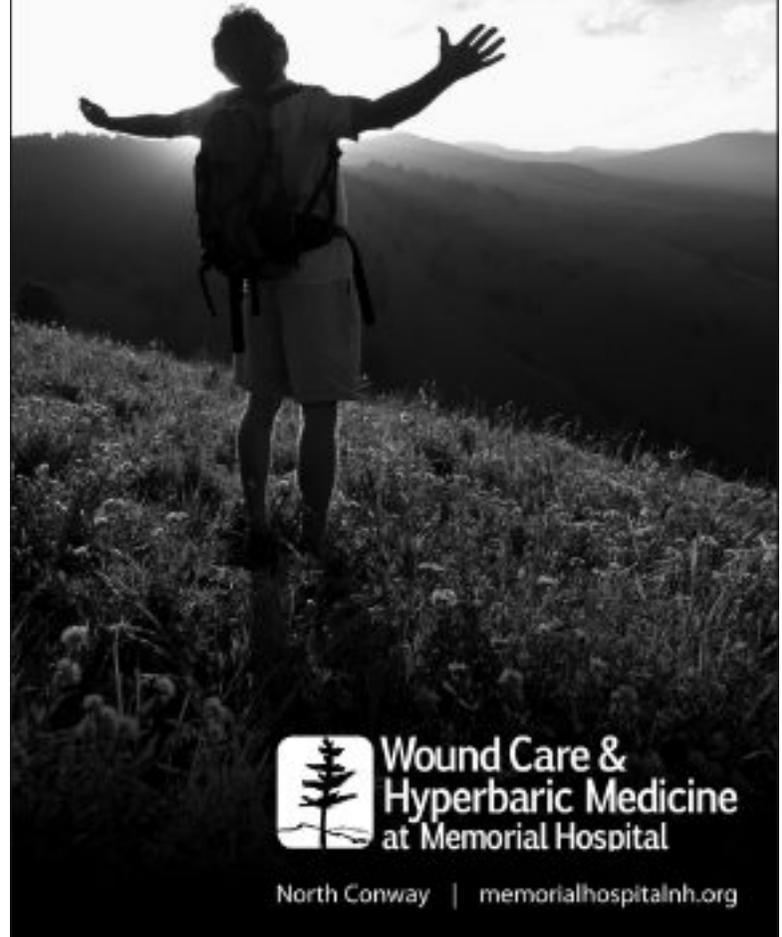
progress in a grand bargain to address reform. Why would they do it after raising the debt ceiling unchallenged? Do we blame unions for going on strike when negotiations do not progress? Negotiations before the debt ceiling is raised is in order. Or we could continue to arrange the chairs on the Titanic and close our eyes to the flood of debt that is coming in!

Nels Gustafson  
Conway

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