

letter urges him to hold firm to our commitment to basic health care for children, pregnant women, the elderly, and the disabled in this country. This letter supports a per capita cap approach to finding savings in the Medicaid Program.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have that letter printed in the RECORD at the end of my statement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1)

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, this letter shows unity and it demonstrates support for President Clinton in his negotiations on this vital matter. As you heard the eloquent Senator from West Virginia describe yesterday, sometimes we have to look beyond partisanship and do what needs doing as Americans. As you heard our respected colleague say, we need to look beyond partisanship, toward compromise if we want to succeed in creating a balanced budget.

This letter is partisan in that it is signed by all Democrats. But it is my feeling that as Americans every Member of the Senate should have an opportunity to endorse the position described in this document. As Americans we all must do our very best for our children in this Nation, and that is what this letter is about.

As the Senators from Nebraska and North Dakota discussed yesterday with the release of the Senate Democratic budget, we can balance the budget in 7 years using the most conservative CBO estimates without hurting our children.

This letter I hold in my hand reflects just one part of that commitment. I do not think my colleagues across the aisle are advocating the block grants so that we will intentionally hurt children in this country. I will simply tell you the reaction of people at the State and local level who actually provide Medicaid services to children is overwhelmingly negative.

They can see from the grassroots level what it will mean to design a Medicaid program, and they do not want drastic funding cuts, and they do not want a block grant, because it fundamentally will not work.

Groups representing almost every decisionmaker and provider in this country have come out against the Medicaid block grant proposal. The Conference of Mayors, the National Association of County Officials, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Democratic Governors Association, the American Hospital Association, and most other medical provider organizations, and all child advocacy groups, all have rallied in opposition to this bad idea.

I heard yesterday from Mayor Norm Rice of Seattle and the Mayors Association, who are sending a letter of their own to the President. The block grant has been condemned by anyone who has thought about how it will affect this country's children and other

vulnerable populations. Tonight there will be a child within a few blocks from this building who will need the help of a caring health care professional, and Medicaid will pay for the care.

Marion Wright Edelman uses a phrase that sums up what we are talking about when it comes to Medicaid and children, "protection of last resort." We have to guarantee that protection. It is a moral commitment, and it is within our grasp. We can balance the budget but we can do it without giving in to mindless partisanship and we can do it without sacrificing our basic commitments.

EXHIBIT 1

U.S. SENATE,

Washington DC, December 13, 1995.

President WILLIAM J. CLINTON,
The White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We are writing to express our strong support for the Medicaid per-capita cap structure in your seven-year budget. We have fought against Medicaid block grants and cuts in the Senate, and we are glad you acknowledge the importance of our position.

We support a balanced budget. We are glad you agree with us that we can balance the budget without undermining the health of children, pregnant women, the disabled, and the elderly.

The savings level of \$54 billion over seven years included in your budget will require rigorous efficiencies and economies in the program. However, after consulting with many Medicaid Directors and service providers across the country, we believe a reduction of this level is possible to achieve without dramatic limits on eligibility or cuts to essential services. States will need flexibility to achieve these savings, and you have taken steps toward granting it in your bill.

We were encouraged that your Medicaid proposal does not pit Medicaid populations against one another in a fight over a limited pot of federal resources.

We were further encouraged to hear Chief of Staff Panetta relay your commitment to veto any budget not containing a fundamental guarantee to Medicaid for eligible Americans.

We commend you on the courage you have exercised in making these commitments to Americans eligible for Medicaid. There is a bottom line when it comes to people's health; do not allow the current Congressional leadership to further reduce our commitment to Medicaid beneficiaries.

Your current proposal is fair and reasonable, and is consistent with what we have advocated on the Senate floor. We urge you in the strongest possible terms to hold fast to these commitments in further negotiations. We are prepared to offer any assistance you may need in this regard.

Sincerely,

Bob Graham; John Breaux; Jay Rockefeller; Herb Kohl; Patrick Leahy; Frank R. Lautenberg; Ted Kennedy; Tom Daschle; Patty Murray; Barbara Boxer; David Pryor; Barbara A. Mikulski; Max Baucus; Paul Simon; Kent Conrad; Wendell Ford; Harry Reid; Paul Wellstone; Richard H. Bryan; Ernest Hollings; Dianne Feinstein; Tom Harkin; Byron L. Dorgan; Chris Dodd; J. Bennett Johnston; Joe Lieberman; Paul Sarbanes; Carol Mosely-Braun; John Glenn; Jeff Bingaman; Carl Levin; Bill Bradley; John F. Kerry; Bob Kerrey; Joe Biden; Daniel K. Akaka; Dale Bumpers; Daniel Inouye; Chuck

Robb; J. James Exon; Howell Heflin; Claiborne Pell; Russ Feingold; Daniel P. Moynihan; Sam Nunn; Robert C. Byrd.

Mr. FEINGOLD addressed the Chair. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Thank you, Mr. President.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. FEINGOLD. Let me first of all express my appreciation to the Senator from Massachusetts and the Senator from West Virginia who just spoke about the advertisement that I also saw this morning with regard to Mrs. Clinton and her health care financing proposals as opposed to those of the leadership in the Congress of this session.

To suggest that the President's proposal last year was in any way the same in terms of cuts to Medicare and Medicaid is truly absurd. In fact, I want to emphasize that one of the very significant things that the President's plan would have done is provide for the first time a national home- and community-based long-term care program, to help people stay in the community, and I think save the country a lot of money in both the Medicare and Medicaid budget.

To suggest that somehow Mrs. Clinton's proposal was in any way, shape or form like what we are seeing today with the slash-and-burn approach to Medicaid and Medicare is, to me, very unfortunate and very distorting and, again, suggests that there is no limit in reference to the actual facts in these situations.

I don't know how the American people are supposed to know who to believe. That is the comment I get most often now at home. "Who do you believe?" And when you are willing to put an ad on the television that suggests that a program that was proposed by the President last year is essentially the same as the Medicare and Medicaid cuts proposed today, I just get the feeling that people will not have any idea who is telling the truth in Washington. I think we all suffer because of that.

CONFEREES HAVE FAILED TO PROTECT FREE SPEECH RIGHTS OF INTERNET USERS

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, on another matter, 2 weeks ago I came to the Senate floor to urge my colleagues who are telecommunications conferees not to adopt potentially unconstitutional legislation in our efforts to protect children on the Internet. I was concerned about the substantial chilling effect this legislation would have on constitutionally protected speech. The media had just reported recently an online service provider's censorship of the word "breast" because it was vulgar, supposedly, despite the fact that that term merely refers to a part of the anatomy.