

advocates, most of whom are themselves women, and as health care providers who focus on the health of the whole person, nurses have a special concern for the well-being of women in our society.

ANA strongly supports the patient protections recommended by the President's Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry and embodied in Patients' Bill of Rights of 1998. As a member of the Commission, as a nurse, as a woman, and as a representative of the millions of registered nurses in the United States, I say without reservation that the nursing profession's commitment to our patients demands our commitment to legislation that will provide true protection from the abusive practices of the managed care industry.

Nurses who are at the bedside when women undergo the trauma of breast cancer and mastectomy are acutely aware of a broad range of unsafe and insensitive practices that threaten the health and safety of their patients. Certainly, requirements by health plans that women undergo mastectomies as outpatient procedures are unconscionable. But that practice is symptomatic of more pervasive dysfunctions in the health care system that impact women disproportionately and must be addressed as well. It is not enough to address only one instance of inappropriate interference in treatment decisions. In fact, offering a token rather than a genuine reform is shameful when there is such suffering in so many other areas.

My colleagues from the women's community who are here today know that aging women suffer the effects of prescription drug limitations that do not allow for their complex health requirements, that the scourge of breast cancer requires not only humane treatment but access to clinical trials so that true progress can be made for future generations, and that women who make health care decisions for themselves and for their families must have full information on which to base those decisions.

The American Nurses Association believes that every individual should have access to health care services along the full continuum of care and be an empowered partner in making health care decisions. We also believe that accountability for quality, cost-effective health care must be shared among health plans, health systems, providers, and consumers. There is only one bill before the Senate which will provide that kind of access and empowerment and accountability for the women of our nation and their families.

Nurses at the bedside have learned what happens when frail, older women receive inappropriate medications, or when mammograms come too late, or when misinformation or misunderstanding lead to dangerous delays in care. For the nurses at the bedside, the need for patient protection and patient advocacy is played out every day, and we urge every Senator to support S. 1890, the Patients' Bill of Rights Act of 1998.

STATEMENT OF FRANCES M. VISCO, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL BREAST CANCER COALITION PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS ACT OF 1998

Once again, on behalf of the 450 organizations and tens of thousands of individuals who are members of the National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC), I would like to reconfirm our support for the "Patients' Bill of Rights Act of 1998" (S. 1890). I applaud Sens. Daschle and Kennedy for introducing a bill which offers real patient protections benefiting women and the potential to help ensure effective, quality health care.

The NBCC is dedicated to the eradication of breast cancer through action and advocacy: it seeks to increase the influence of breast cancer survivors and other activities

over research, clinical trials, and public policy and to ensure access to quality health care for all women. NBCC recognizes that the evolving health care system affords us the opportunity to define and focus on true quality of care for women and their families. We cannot afford to let this opportunity pass.

The NBCC believes that breast cancer patients have fundamental rights, including: the right to receive accurate information about their health plans; access to the right providers; involvement in treatment decisions that are based on good science; confidentiality of their health information; and coverage for routine health care costs associated with participation in clinical trials. S. 1890 guarantees patients these rights and offers women a legitimate "Patients' Bill of Rights."

Other bills being considered by the Senate that are being marketed as women's health bills do not in fact give women the substantive protections that they need. Instead, the bills offer routine reauthorizations of research and public health programs that Congress must attend to as part of the usual course of business. While these provisions and efforts to move them forward quickly are extremely important, they do not transform proposed health reform legislation into a women's health care bill. To ensure true quality health care for women and their families, we need legislation, such as S. 1890, which offers comprehensive patient protections against the problems that insured women encounter every day with their health plans.

One of the NBCC's most pressing concerns is that health insurance and managed care plans are erecting barriers to good science by increasingly refusing reimbursement for routine patient costs when breast cancer patients participate in approved clinical trials. This practice is preventing us from finding desperately needed scientific answers about breast cancer and severely affects the treatment breast cancer patients receive. Only three percent of adult cancer patients are enrolled in clinical trials—insurance reimbursement is often a major obstacle to clinical trial participation. In fact, one of our NBCC members who participated in an NCI clinical trial five years ago, only recently resolved her legal battles with her insurance company over coverage of the costs associated with the NCI trial. The Patients' Bill of Rights Act is an important first step in ensuring third party coverage for the routine patient costs incurred within a clinical trial.

The NBCC is prepared to work with the Congress, and will mobilize our nationwide network of advocates to ensure that meaningful legislation like the Patients' Bill of Rights Act is enacted into law. We offer thanks to all of the leaders gathered here today for their work to ensure that breast cancer patients and all American women and families receive quality health care.

SCHEDULE OF THE PRESIDENT

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I come to the floor today with a revelation that I suspect will come as a bit of a surprise to some of my colleagues and to a few Americans. Mr. President, fellow Senators and fellow Americans, President Bill Clinton, is in town. That is right. The President is actually in the White House today.

For any who have followed the President's extensive travel throughout his term in office, you would notice that I say his "time in Washington" because

that has been far less than his term in office. The fact that the President has actually planned to stay in town for a week is, in my opinion, a bit newsworthy.

The President is supposed to be the head of our country. Instead, I suspect that Bill Clinton has been our country's feet. This President is already the most foreign-traveled President in U.S. history, with 32 trips abroad in less than 6 years in office. In just the last 2 years, he has spent 79 days overseas. Those 79 days abroad in 2 years are almost as many days as President Bush spent during his 4 years in office.

If and when he has come home to the United States does not mean that he came home to the White House. President Clinton spent almost half of last year, 149 days, and over half of this year, now 155 days, out of the White House. What has he been doing while logging those frequent flier miles on Air Force One? Well, a lot has been fundraising; 65 days over just the last 2 years have included out-of-town fundraising trips, and 14 more are planned for this month alone.

Now the President is back in town for one of his rare weeks in Washington. What did he do on his first day at work yesterday? He sought, once again, to divert attention from his own problems—this time, by threatening to shut down the Government. It is hard to tell if this President has come back to town to simply repack his bags or to take, or attempt to take, Congress hostage.

President Clinton appears intent on making the sequel to the movie "Wag the Dog." The President hasn't participated in the process of government at all this year, and now he returns, seemingly, to attempt to shut the process down. I have to say I think this is a bit of diversion. I don't believe it is leadership.

Is it unfair to criticize? Is it partisan to be harsh? I asked myself that question before I came to the floor this morning. I don't think so. Here is why I don't think so. Consider just two issues that we all believe are important issues, that even the President has acknowledged are important.

In just a few moments we are going to resume debate on a most important piece of legislation, the agricultural appropriations. It is on that that I want to speak for just a few moments, an issue that President Clinton once ignored. He ignored solutions to help farmers and ranchers. He didn't speak about them in his first term of office and has spoken little about them in his second term. Now we have legislation that we think will help farmers and ranchers, and on his first week back in town he says "I'll veto it."

"Agriculture" is a word that this President hasn't found a place for in his vocabulary. Why? Because American farmers make up less than 3 percent of the American public. They don't have as much political clout as they once had. So this President hasn't

addressed this issue. But just now, when American agriculture is in crisis and this Congress, in a bipartisan way, is attempting to find solutions to that crisis, our President comes to town, finds his footing, and says, "I'll veto the effort."

Mr. President, that is fair if you had been part of the process, if you had been in here working with us, if there had been legitimate give-and-take and finally a breakdown. That is not the case at all.

The President was absent—traveling, fundraising—away from what is most important. So he seeks now to make up for his absence by having not just one position on agriculture but three positions. First of all, he asked for about \$2.3 billion in assistance on September 22. That was just 2 weeks ago. Congress then roughly doubled that amount. Yet now, to hide the fact that he had not been paying attention to American agriculture, President Clinton is demanding more, much more—nearly \$7 billion. And now he threatens to veto legislation that Congress will send to him—legislation that will give twice the money that he asked for less than a month ago.

For 2 years, he has failed to use the tools that could have addressed the agriculture problems in substantial ways. He has ignored the tools—tools that I have requested the President not let rust away in some storage shed down at USDA, tools of trade, tools of trade intervention, humanitarian aid. All of those kinds of things that would have moved our products into the market were not used and have gathered rust and sat idle. Why, then, is the President coming back almost in an effort to demand a scorched-Earth policy? Is it politics, or is it the wag factor that is now at work? I am not sure. But, Mr. President, I think you have little credibility in this area.

Let me discuss just one other area briefly. I know the Senator from West Virginia is waiting.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's 5 minutes have expired.

Mr. CRAIG. There is the issue of Social Security. So important was it that the President declared it in his State of the Union Address as an effort to save Social Security. Yet, the President has not bothered to make one step in that direction. The Congress waited a year, but no plan came from the White House. Just as with the farm crisis, he has only managed to use it—not address it, much less solve it. Like the farm crisis, he sought to use it to turn attention from himself. Instead of buckling down, this President has traveled around; over half of the days of this year the President has been out of town. He has found time to travel, he has found time to go overseas, he has found time to fundraise; but he has not found time to send any one plan to save Social Security to the Congress of the United States, or any one plan to alleviate a farm crisis that is now emerging.

Well, I suspect that if the solution to Social Security had been in Beijing, or Chile, or Ghana, or Uganda, or Rwanda, or South America, he might have found it there because that is where the President was. Why now, the last week that Congress plans to be in session, with a schedule that was established at the first of the year, did the President find his way back to the White House to sit and only threaten—threaten to veto here, threaten to veto there?

Mr. President, are you planning to shut down the Government? Is it a plan for diversion? Is it a plan to hide? Well, we have some problems and we are going to work to solve them. Those solutions should come in a bipartisan way. Mr. President, I hope you will be a part of the solution. The American people deserve nothing less than that.

I don't like coming to the floor to give these kinds of speeches, but sometimes I feel they are important. Sometimes I feel it is important for the American people to recognize, as we do, that there are times when we work together and not times when we simply find our footing to threaten or to change the subject or to divert attention.

Is the Presidency in crisis today? Yes, it is. We all know why it is. That is a constitutional tragedy. That will work its will. The House is underway in that process. Let us be allowed to work our will to solve the problem of financing our Government for the coming year.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BYRD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I have some remarks, which may require 10 or 11 or 12 minutes.

I ask unanimous consent that I may be recognized for such time as I may consume, and that the previous order to proceed with the Agriculture conference report be delayed until I complete my statement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

SAFE SCHOOLS: A MUST FOR THE NATION

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, with the new school year now in full swing, our youngsters are brimming with the excitement of making new friends, radiating enthusiasm for new studies, and preparing for the challenges that lie ahead of them. Students are tackling new reading assignments and committing algebraic formulas to memory. During recess hour, they are frolicking in the school playground with new classmates and old friends, enjoying the waning days of shirt-sleeve weather. They feel safe and secure—free from threatening situations and out of harm's way.

But as our children leave home each morning for the school day, we as parents, grandparents, educators, and leg-

islators, must regretfully remember that, just a few months ago, some of our nation's schools looked more like virtual war zones with bloodshed and the tragic loss of life. From Paducah, KY, to Springfield, OR, the notion of schools as a safe haven was shattered by the sound of gunfire, and we must now begin to face the formidable challenge of rebuilding that serene and tranquil school environment that each and every student deserves.

Today, responding to my concerns about this trend, I am unveiling a new branch of my web site which contains the most up-to-date and accurate information available from authoritative sources on school safety. I have designed this web site to be an electronic resource book, complete with descriptions of school safety initiatives underway in West Virginia, updates on federal funding available for violence prevention efforts, and the latest information on legislation moving through the Congress. I hope that this addition to my web site will serve as an important tool for parents, students, educators, and lawmakers in addressing the issue of school safety in West Virginia and in other States.

In concert with the release of my school safety resources web site, I am also introducing companion legislation in the Senate today to Representative BOB WISE's recently introduced legislation, H.R. 4515, to provide for the establishment of school violence prevention hotlines. Often, a potentially harmful student confides in his closest friend about his intentions to launch a violent attack on school premises. Or perhaps, teachers notice a change in a student's demeanor or an action completely uncharacteristic of a happy, well-balanced child. Occasionally, the parents of an otherwise cheerful, amicable son or daughter detect hostility in their child's voice when talking about a particular group of students. All of these scenarios may be just a bad day on the surface or semantics misinterpreted, but they also may be the first signs of a potentially threatening student.

My legislation would provide funds to local education agencies and schools that have established or proposed to establish school violence prevention hotlines. It is essential that parents, students, and teachers have an outlet where they can report threatening situations to authorities who will watch over the student's behavior and alert school officials. School violence hotlines can prevent a disturbed student in need of help from taking that next, sometimes fatal, step.

I have long been concerned about the increasing incidence of violence in the classroom and have supported numerous efforts to combat this kind of outrageous behavior and strengthen discipline for all students. After receiving a disturbing report in 1990 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention which stated that nearly twenty-four percent of West Virginia's students between grades nine and twelve