

Let me close with another quote from Senator La Follette's inaugural speech on the floor of the Senate. He was responding to the argument that public sentiment had been whipped into an unreasonable hysteria over the question of whether the railroads controlled the Congress. His words seem quite apt to me as a response to those who argue on this floor that we really have no campaign finance problem in this country—and that the media and the groups that support reform exaggerate the impact of money on the legislative process. He said:

[I]t does not lie in the power of any or all of the magazines of the country or of the press, great as it is, to destroy, without justification, the confidence of the people in the American Congress. . . . It rests solely with the United States Senate to fix and maintain its own reputation for fidelity to public trust. It will be judged by the record. It can not repose in security upon its exalted position and the glorious heritage of its traditions. It is worse than folly to feel, or to profess to feel, indifferent with respect to public judgment. If public confidence is wanting in Congress, it is not of hasty growth, it is not the product of 'jaundiced journalism.' It is the result of years of disappointment and defeat.

Mr. President, the Senate must respect the public judgment and fix its reputation for fidelity to the public trust. It must let the solid bipartisan majority of this body that supports reform, work its will and pass a campaign finance reform bill this year. Until it does, Mr. President, I plan to Call the Bankroll. I'm going to acknowledge the 800 pound gorilla in this chamber, and I'm going to ask my colleagues to do the same. And then I'm going to see if we can't agree that it's time to show him the door.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. WELLSTONE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VOINOVICH). The Senator from Minnesota.

#### SUPPORT FOR CALLING THE BANKROLL

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I would be proud, I say to my colleague, Senator FEINGOLD, to be his first recruit in calling the bankroll. I think it is extremely important. I also want to say, being a Senator from the Midwest, that we talk about the fighting La Follette, and we have a fighting RUSS FEINGOLD from the State of Wisconsin, who I think is the Bob La Follette of this Senate. I thank him for his focus on what I believe is a core issue.

Mr. President, how much time do we have on our side in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Four minutes.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Might I ask, so that I know, if I suggest the absence of a quorum, does that time burn off on our part?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has to get unanimous consent that the quorum call not be counted against you.

#### PATIENT PROTECTION ACT

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I will take a couple of minutes, actually, to speak on our time. I want to make a connection between what my colleague from Wisconsin, Senator FEINGOLD, was saying about the mix of money and politics and all the ways in which big money undercuts representative democracy. I want to make a connection to a piece of legislation that we are trying to get out here on the floor, which is the Patient Protection Act. I say to my colleague from Wisconsin, who is calling the payroll, one of the things I want to do is maybe just come to the floor and present some data about contributions that come from parties on all sides of this question. But from my point of view, you have a health insurance industry that sort of really basically has made the effort to keep universal health care coverage and, for that matter, basic protection of patients, consumer protection, off of the agenda. I think it is our responsibility to put it back on the agenda.

I think we have reached a point in our country where the pendulum has swung too far in the direction of increasingly "corporatized" medicine, and it has become corporatized, bureaucratized. You have basically a few large insurance companies that own and control the majority of the managed care plans and, as a result of that, the consumers and the patients wonder where we fit in.

There are a series of Senators on the Democratic side—I certainly hope there will be an equal number on the Republican side—that are committed to bringing patient protection legislation to the floor. Some of my colleagues, such as Senators DURBIN, KENNEDY, I think BOXER, and certainly Senator DASCHLE have introduced a bill, and we were all speaking about this last night. We want to talk about ways in which there can be sensible consumer protection.

That is really what the issue is: Making sure our caregivers—our doctors and our nurses—are able to make decisions about the care we need as opposed to having the insurance industry decide; making sure you have a medicine that is not a monopoly medicine with the bottom line as the only line; making sure people don't find themselves, as employers shift from one plan to another, no longer able to take their child to a trusted family doctor; making sure families with children with illnesses are able to have access to the kind of specialty care that is the best care for their children; making sure there is an ombudsman program available so that advocates who are there, to whom people can go, do know what their rights are; making sure that when we have an external review process of the kind of decisions that are made, people have a place to make an appeal and they know the decision will be a fair decision—making sure, in other words, that we are able to obtain the best care for our families.

As I travel around Minnesota—and around the country, for that matter—I find it astounding the number of people, the number of families, that fall between the cracks. The number of people—even if you are old enough for Medicare, it is not comprehensive. Seniors from Minnesota can't afford the prescription drug costs. It does nothing about catastrophic expenses at the end of your life. If you are ill and you have to be in a nursing home, almost everything you make is basically going to be taken away; there will be nothing left.

That is one of the things that strikes terror in the hearts of elderly people—or people aren't poor enough for medical assistance, which is by no means comprehensive enough; or people aren't lucky enough to be working for an employer that can provide them with good coverage.

To boot, what happens right now is that people who have the coverage find that with this medicine that we have, it is just going so far in the direction of becoming a bottom-line medicine that consumers are basically left in the dust.

We want to have some sensible protection for consumers. We want to bring it to the floor of the Senate. And we want to have a debate on this legislation.

The majority party—the Republican Party—leadership has taken to the situation that they want to be able to sign off on amendments we introduce. But that is not the way it works. It not a question of some Senators telling other Senators what amendments are the right amendments to introduce. We should have the full-scale debate. We should be able to come out here with amendments. We should be able to come out here with amendments that provide consumers with more rights to make sure that people have access to the care they need; to make sure the decisions are made by qualified providers; to make sure the bottom line is not the only line; to make sure this is not an insensitive medical system; to make sure that people do not go without the kind of care they need. We want to do that.

We are committed to making this fight, and, if necessary, I think what you are going to see happen over the next week and beyond is that we are going to, one way or another, have a debate about this critically important issue.

As long as I am talking about health care, I would like to say also that I think the other central issue is the way in which the insurance industry is taking universal health care coverage off the table. We need to put it back on the table. I can't think of an issue that is more important to families in our country.

Mr. President, might I ask how much time we have left?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has exceeded his time.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Presiding Officer for his patience. I ask