

financially rewarded for their success in doing so.

Nancy Ledbetter, an oncology nurse and clinical research nurse coordinator for Kaiser Permanente said, “. . . necessary care is being withheld in order to contain costs.” This is from the June 16, 1999 Journal of the National Cancer Institute.

A breast cancer surgeon wrote me:

Severe limitations are being placed upon surgeons in giving these women [with breast cancer] total care . . . Patients feel that their care is reduced to the mechanics of surgery alone, ignoring the whole patient's medical, emotional, and psychological needs.

Surely, one of the oldest axioms of medicine, and the way my father used to practice medicine, is that you can't just treat the wound, you have to treat the whole patient as an individual, as a human being.

In my State, again, over 80 percent of people who have insurance are in managed care. Forty percent of California's Medicare beneficiaries are in managed care. Some say Californians have been pioneers for managed care. Some even say Californians have been the Nation's “guinea pigs.”

The complaints don't abate: delaying diagnoses and treatments as tumors grow; trying the cheapest therapies first, instead of the most effective; refusing needed hospital admissions; refusing to refer patients to specialists who can accurately diagnose conditions and provide effective treatments; we hear complaints about shoving patients out of the hospitals prematurely, against doctor's wishes. We hear complaints about misclassifying medically necessary treatments as “cosmetic.”

We hear about plans demanding that doctors justify their care and second-guessing doctors' medical judgments.

We have had heard about doctors exaggerating the patient's condition to be able to give them a certain drug, or keep them in a hospital beyond a certain length of time, to get plans to pay for care.

I hope this amendment can restore some balance to the system by empowering patients and the medical profession to provide the kind of quality medical care that people not only pay for but that they deserve.

That is why I feel so strongly about this amendment.

Again, I harken back to the day when I had the first example in 1997 of a woman in a major managed care plan undergoing an outpatient radical mastectomy—7:30 in the morning, surgery; 4:30, out on the street with drains hanging from her chest, and unable to know where she was going.

That is not good medicine.

I can only end my comments on this amendment by saying that the amendment is sincerely presented.

The amendment is the heart of a Patients' Bill of Rights.

The amendment should not increase premium costs.

The amendment is what the American people expect.

And the amendment simply says that an insurance company cannot arbitrarily interfere with the doctor's decision with respect to treatment or hospitalization.

I don't think that is too much to ask this body to legislate and to state unequivocally, and I think every single person in my State, as well as every State, will be much better off once this is accomplished.

Let me end by saying that I believe that Senator DASCHLE is willing to work out an agreement which allows a number of amendments to come to the floor and be debated, provided that these amendments can be voted up or down.

I suspect that what we are going to really end up with is a bipartisan Patients' Bill of Rights. I suspect that if we can get this unanimous consent agreement, we will find that there will be many on the other side of the aisle who will vote for this amendment, and there will be some of us who will vote for some of the amendments on the other side as well.

It seems to me that when you have a situation whereby the physicians in America have reached the point where they have decided to unionize and collectively bargain that this should be a very loud call that all is not well with the practice of medicine in the United States of America.

It should be a very loud call for a unanimous consent agreement which will allow us, on the floor of the Senate, to work out a series of amendments which can provide the kind of quality care that the people of the United States are entitled to, and that certainly 20 million Californians in managed care are.

I thank the Chair.

I yield the floor.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE RESOLUTION

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr President, I want to express my support for the resolution, which was adopted by the Senate yesterday, to begin a new tradition in this distinguished body: to begin our days by saying the Pledge of Allegiance each morning in this Chamber. There were about ten of my colleagues on the floor this morning to inaugurate this new tradition, and I only wish there could have been more to join us.

We will pay tribute to our flag, the greatest symbol of our freedom, in the Chamber where we are sworn to uphold the very freedoms the flag symbolizes. There can be no more fitting tribute to our Constitution than the free and unfettered expression of patriotism that the Pledge of Allegiance represents.

Today in the Senate, we honor the flag. In contrast to this voluntary cele-

bration of our flag, the other chamber today may vote on an amendment to our Constitution that asks us to turn away from the freedoms we cherish in order to protect our flag, in effect to compel reverence for the flag. This amendment, in a misdirected attempt to protect a cherished symbol, instead tears at the very fabric of our freedom.

In the past, I have walked in the Appleton, WI, parade on Flag Day. I am told that it is the largest Flag Day parade in our country—it is certainly one of the best. As I saw the faces of those people, those Americans, as they waved the flag, filled with pride in our great nation, I knew then not only that patriotism shouldn't be legislated, but that it doesn't need to be. It is in this Chamber and in the hearts and minds of millions of Americans across this country. Again, I celebrate the effort to pay tribute to the flag, and the freedom it represents, in this Chamber each day. I only hope when and if the amendment that threatens that freedom is considered on this floor, we will remember the Pledge of Allegiance, and remain true to the liberty it speaks of, and that all of us hold so dear.

CUBA

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, during the Memorial Day recess, I spent two days in Havana, Cuba, from June 1 to 3. I met with numerous Cuban officials, including a marathon six-and-a-half hour session with President Fidel Castro, with Cuban human rights dissidents, with religious leaders, with several foreign ambassadors and with our U.S. team. I am convinced there are a number of steps we can take, pursuant to our existing U.S. policy, to create closer people-to-people relations with Cuba. Sharing medical research, especially on immunizations, would be appropriate, between the National Institutes of Health and the Cuban Ministry of Health. Former Gen. Barry McCaffrey, head of U.S. drug policy, had suggested to me that we should work closer with the Cuban government on drug interdiction, and I think he is right.

Relations between our two countries, only 90 miles apart, are almost non-existent. We have an embargo and a boycott. We have no exchange of ambassadors, and the limited coordination between our governments does not extend beyond very limited cooperation on drug interdiction.

I believe it is worthwhile to share with my colleagues some of my findings and impressions from my trip. The issue of the embargo is complex, and I am not yet ready to advocate a position. But there are other issues, such as the benefits of increasing contact and cooperation, which merit comment at this time.

Upon arrival in Havana about 2 pm June 1, we were met by Jorge Lexcano

Perez, President of the Commission on International Relation, and Jose Manuel Barrios, Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' U.S. Department. Primarily, all parties agreed that both nations would profit from better relations between the two.

I met next for more than an hour with our country team at the U.S. Embassy. We discussed the steps needed to normalize relations between our two nations and the dynamics of Cuba's government and economy, including the booming black market. We discussed the social climate, including religious freedom and human rights concerns.

I met next with Dr. Jose Miller, President of Casa de la Comunidad Hebrea de Cuba (The Jewish Community House of Cuba) and leader of Cuba's Jewish community, and with Adela Dworin, Dr. Miller's Vice President. Dr. Miller maintained that freedom of religion has been "no problem" in Cuba for both Jews and Christians since the fall of the Berlin Wall eight years ago. Cardinal Jaime Ortega, in a later meeting, also stressed that Cuba has seen an improvement in religious freedom during the past decade. Both said the greater openness came from a recognition on President Castro's part that a religious reconciliation was necessary. President Castro, Dr. Miller noted, has attended Hanukkah services at his synagogue. Dr. Miller and Ms. Dworin estimated that Cuba's Jewish population has shrunk to 1,500 from about 15,000 in 1959, and that they must bring in a rabbi to hold high holiday services.

We held our final meeting June 1 with Dr. Pedro Lopez Saura at The Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, an impressive biotech facility that has apparently pioneered a vaccination for Meningitis B. Meningitis B, which also plagues the United States, is a severe infectious disease that may lead to permanent neurological damage and even to death in acute cases. Meningitis strikes about 2,600 people annually, more than half under five years old. Meningitis B accounts for 50-55 percent of all U.S. cases. While NIH, our federal medical research arm, has a budget 1,000 times the size of The Cuban center's, the Cuban facility has apparently outstripped American efforts in a couple of narrow areas, including Meningitis B vaccine and interferon work. I found Dr. Lopez, who has trained in Cuba, Belgium, East Germany and Finland, very impressive. I suggested that Dr. Lopez visit NIH Director Dr. Harold Varmus, who has already visited the Cuban facility, for an exchange that could benefit both nations.

We began our meetings the next morning, June 2, with the Cuban Minister of Health, Dr. Carlos Dotres Martinez, at one of Cuba's largest medical teaching facilities on the outskirts of

Havana. Dr. Martinez touted the Cuban health system and presented charts and statistics to suggest that Cuba's aggressive research and vaccination program has eradicated polio, diphtheria and other pestilences and improved its citizens' health and longevity. In a common Cuban refrain, Dr. Martinez argued that the U.S. blockade has forced Cubans to spend more for medical imports from Europe and China. He estimated Cuba has spent an estimated \$20 million more for freight and other incidental costs on top of the fixed costs of \$50 million to \$100 million.

I suggested that Dr. Martinez meet with HHS Secretary Donna Shalala.

We met next with Concepcion de la Campa, President and General Director of the Finlay Institute, which manufactures vaccines, including the Meningitis B vaccine pioneered by the Cuban research labs. I had a particular interest in this biotechnology effort because a company with a substantial base in my state of Pennsylvania is negotiating a license to work with Cubans to produce the Meningitis B vaccine. Under their proposed arrangement, the Pennsylvania company would produce the vaccine in quantity for distribution in the United States and elsewhere in the First World and the Cubans would manufacture the vaccine for the rest of the world.

Mrs. Campa, like her Cuban medical colleagues, agreed that medical research would be boosted by closer relations between the United States and Cuba, and by such joint ventures.

We met next at the U.S. Ambassador's Residence with ambassadors from several nations: Charge Josef Marsicek of the Czech Republic, Ambassador Reinhold Huber of Germany, Ambassador Eduardo Junco Bonet of Spain, Ambassador David Ridgway of Britain, and Ambassador Keith Christie of Canada. The ambassadors gave me a frank assessment of President Castro and the Cuban realities. Like the US team, the European diplomats also saw a thawing in the Castro regime's stridency, as demonstrated by Cuban overtures for dialogue.

After my talk with the ambassadors, I met at the US residence with five Cuban dissidents and human rights activists: A member of the Christian Liberation Movement; a former Batistara soldier, an environmental and peace activist; a medical doctor removed from his post for criticizing the Cuban medical establishment; and a member of the Pro-Human Rights Party. We discussed human rights and repression generally and specifically, with a focus on "The Four," four jailed Cuban dissidents whose plight has stirred international human rights complaints. I have omitted their names and limited comments on their statements to protect their identities.

The dissidents told us passionately of the Cuban government's intolerance for any dissent, demonstrated by frequent jailings and loss of jobs and travel opportunities for those who speak out. The dissidents disagreed on remedies for accomplishing change, differing, for example, on whether the United States should lift its embargo.

At 8 pm Wednesday evening, we arrived at the President's complex for a dinner meeting with President Castro. The President arrived 10 minutes later, apologized for his tardiness, and proceeded to host us for a six hour and 37 minute session, ending at nearly 3 am. We had been advised that President Castro enjoyed lengthy talks. We knew we were in for a long night when President Castro said he had worked until 5:45 am the night before and then slept eight hours, waking at 2 pm—just six hours before our meeting. We did not even move from the President's conference room to his dining room until midnight.

I found President Castro, at 73, robust and engaging. Always cordial, he was at times jocular and at other times guarded. He wore his trademark green military uniform with modest insignia and took notes throughout much of our meeting. During our talk, we covered the gamut of subjects.

I asked about the possibility of parole for the four celebrated dissidents. President Castro told me, "I think they should fulfill their sentences because they have done great damage to this country," He insisted that charges against Cuba of human rights abuses "were totally unfair," arguing that Cuba did not torture prisoners, employ death squads or practice assassination.

On the issue of drug trafficking, President Castro said his country has been cracking down, including establishing the death penalty for international drug trafficking. "We are willing to cooperate" with the United States, he said. "We don't ask the Americans for anything in return. We do it as a matter of ethics." He noted that Cuba would not, however, allow the United States to violate its territorial waters or air space.

I asked President Castro about the assassination of President Kennedy, an area of particular interest for me because of my work as a lawyer on the Warren commission. President Castro maintained that the Cuban government played no role in the assassination, and that it would have been insane for it to have become involved, given that the United States, by his reckoning, was looking for provocation or pretense to invade Cuba. Castro said Lee Harvey Oswald, Kennedy's assassin, wanted to go to Cuba—a request the Cubans denied—simply to transit to the Soviet Union. President Castro said he was relieved that the Warren Commission concluded that Cuba was not involved with Oswald.

I asked President Castro if he was concerned that people might think Cuba had been involved with Oswald. He said, "Yes, we were concerned."

President Castro gave an elaborate description of the Cuban Missile Crisis. He described how Cuba initially bought its weapons from Belgium, a NATO country, to avoid inciting the United States. But the second Belgian shipment was sabotaged and blown up on Havana's docks, Castro said, and he eventually arranged to buy Soviet arms. President Castro said former Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev made a mistake in not describing the missiles as defensive weapons and in "getting into a game of definitions" instead of simply maintaining his right to install weapons without question. President Castro noted the United States had weapons at the time in Turkey and Italy. He described his hunting trip in Russia with Khrushchev, and how Khrushchev had pulled out and read from a letter to Kennedy. When Khrushchev read a passage about Kennedy promising to pull U.S. missiles out of Turkey and Italy, President Castro said, Khrushchev realized he had made a mistake in revealing that Khrushchev was going to breach his deal with Castro and remove the Cuban missiles. That would leave Cuba vulnerable to U.S. invasion, in President Castro's view.

In the end, President Castro said, the Russian withdrawal also served Cuba's purpose. "We preferred the risk of invasion to the presence of Soviet troops, because it would have established an image [of Cuba] as a Soviet base."

President Castro told us about various assassination attempts against him by the United States since 1959, some documented by the U.S. Senate's Church Committee. Plans were launched to poison President Castro's milk shake, to plant an exploding cigar and to blow him up. "Some of them were childish," he said. President Castro said he had survived largely "as a matter of luck."

I asked him how he felt about being the target of so many assassination attempts.

President Castro replied, "Do you play any sports?"

I said, "I play squash every day."

He said, "That is my sport."

Throughout the evening, the Cuban President frequently dispatched an aide or minister in the wee hours to produce a document or find an official's name. The aides performed their research in short order. In one case, President Castro wanted the name of a U.S. Senator who had visited Cuba in 1977, which turned out to be former Sen. Lowell Weicker of Connecticut.

The next morning—or, more accurately, later Thursday morning—we met with Cardinal Ortega. Like Dr. Miller of the Havana synagogue, Cardinal Ortega also said the Cuban regime had adopted a more open attitude

toward religion, from the previous "climate of fear." He attributed the thaw in the government's position to a recognition that it was not easy to erase religious faith. He noted there have always been diplomatic relations between Havana and the Vatican.

As for living conditions in Cuba under Castro, the Cardinal said the obvious in noting widespread poverty. On human rights, he said the Castro regime always equates human rights as the right to health, study and education, a low threshold.

Our visit was facilitated by the assistance and cooperation of the U.S. team and the Cuban government.

CHILD ACCESS PREVENTION

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, as the 1999 school year came to a close, our Nation was shocked by the incidences of school violence that claimed so many lives. In the aftermath of these tragedies, Americans have become more sensitized to the dangers of guns and the easy access that children have to them. Yet, despite this additional scrutiny by parents, guns continue to claim the lives of young people. Each day, more children are dying, not just in schoolyards, but in the home. They are killed by guns in unintentional shootings.

Unintentional shootings are among the leading causes of death for young people. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, each day at least one person under the age of 19 is killed by an unintentional shooting. Unsafe guns are an enormous danger to these young people, who are the victims of 33 percent of all accidental firearm deaths. And in Michigan, people under the age of 19 make up more than 50 percent of the fatalities caused by unintentional shootings.

Unintentional shootings almost always occur at home, when a child finds a loaded weapon and while playing with it, shoots himself, a sibling, or a young friend. Some parents try to take precautions against these tragedies by hiding their firearm in a drawer, a closet or even under the mattress. Unfortunately, if it is loaded or without a safety lock, it does not matter where that gun is hidden. It has the potential to kill, and for hundreds of kids each year, it does just that.

Daily shootings resulting from the careless storage of guns can easily be prevented. Locking devices for guns are simple to handle and inexpensive, but they must be used. In the Juvenile Justice bill that passed the Senate just a few weeks ago, an amendment was included that would require all sales, deliveries or transfers of handguns to include a secure gun storage or safety device, which was a step in the right direction. But, there was nothing to require that adults, especially with children in the house, use those safety devices. Safe storage laws, or Child Ac-

cess Prevention, CAP, laws are needed to ensure that adults store loaded guns with safety devices in place and in locations reasonably inaccessible to children.

There is no doubt that owning a firearm requires precaution and responsibility, especially when young children are around. CAP laws hold adults criminally responsible if a loaded firearm was left where it could be reasonably accessed by a juvenile, and the juvenile uses or brings into public the adult's firearm without the permission of his parent or guardian. Criminal liability would not apply to adults who have no reasonable expectation of having a juvenile on their premises or if a juvenile obtains a firearm as a result of an unlawful entry. CAP laws simply require adults to use common sense safety measures, such as secure gun storage devices or trigger locks for their firearms.

Currently, there are 16 States that have enacted CAP laws. And since the first law took effect 10 years ago, state CAP laws have reduced unintentional deaths of children by firearms on an average of 23 percent. In Florida, just one year after CAP was enacted, unintentional shootings dropped more than 50 percent. And for every state that has enacted a safe storage law, there is compelling evidence that because of CAP, children are safer at home.

Despite these successes, there are still an overwhelming number of states, including Michigan, without CAP laws. And until there is awareness that guns should be locked up and stored unloaded, guns will continue to claim the lives of innocent children. Until CAP or safe storage laws are the law of the land, people will continue to learn the hard way that the guns in their home meant for protection will continue to claim the lives of those they are trying to protect.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, June 23, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,594,431,506,414.50 (Five trillion, five hundred ninety-four billion, four hundred thirty-one million, five hundred six thousand, four hundred fourteen dollars and fifty cents).

One year ago, June 23, 1998, the Federal debt stood at \$5,500,927,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred billion, nine hundred twenty-seven million).

Five years ago, June 23, 1994, the Federal debt stood at \$4,598,158,000,000 (Four trillion, five hundred ninety-eight billion, one hundred fifty-eight million).

Ten years ago, June 23, 1989, the Federal debt stood at \$2,780,957,000,000 (Two trillion, seven hundred eighty billion, nine hundred fifty-seven million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$2 trillion—\$2,813,474,506,414.50 (Two trillion, eight hundred thirteen billion,