

room. I'm at one end; Hillary is at the other. And there was a guy—I still remember this guy's name; his name was Jeff Glekel—trying to talk me into joining the law journal.

And I said—and it was one of these affirmative action things; he wanted a token guy with an accent. [Laughter] And so he wanted some redneck on the law journal at Yale. You know, it seemed like it would be a good thing. And I kept telling him I didn't want to be on the law journal because I was going home to Arkansas to live and what the hell did I need to be on the law journal. [Laughter] And all the time I'm staring at Hillary who is at the other end of the room, with a book.

So in the middle of this guy's passionate entreaty for me to join the law journal, Hillary slams down the book, and she walks across the library, and she looks at me and says, "Look, you have been staring at me for weeks, and I've been staring back. So at least we ought to know each other's name. I'm Hillary Rodham. What's your name?" I couldn't remember my name. [Laughter]

Now, question number one, this woman has initiative—good in a Senator.

The second thing I want to tell you is this: In 1973, after we had gone together for 2 years and we were very much in love, I was very ambivalent about Hillary coming home to Arkansas. She actually moved to Massachusetts for a while to work for the Children's Defense Fund. And I wanted her to go to New York or go home to Chicago because I thought she had such enormous potential for public service—I didn't want her to, of course, I wanted her to go with me. But I was so afraid I was, in effect, taking away from her life and from this country the most gifted person I had ever known up to that time.

Well, over 25 years later, I still haven't met anybody I thought was as gifted. And in 1993, when we moved to the White House, I said, "I want you to decide where you want to go and what you want to do when we get out of here. For 20 years we've gone where I wanted to go and done what I wanted to do, and I'll give you the next 20 years. And if I'm still alive after that, we'll fight over the rest." [Laughter]

And so all she is really doing today is what I thought for the benefit of the country and

for the development of her own potential for service maybe she should have been able to do in 1973. I'm very glad she didn't do it then, and very glad she is doing it today.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 10:10 p.m. at a private residence. The press release issued by the Office of the Press Secretary did not include the complete opening remarks of the President. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on Proposed Patients' Bill of Rights Legislation

August 23, 1999

Protecting the health of America's families is not and should never be a partisan issue. Demonstrating this fact, the American Medical Association, the largest organization of physicians in the Nation, has just endorsed the bipartisan Patients' Bill of Rights sponsored by Congressman Norwood and Congressman Dingell.

The AMA's action sends a strong message to Congress that it is time to put politics aside and pass a Patients' Bill of Rights that provides meaningful protections for all Americans in all health plans and holds plans accountable when their actions cause harm to patients. With over 20 House Republicans cosponsoring the Norwood-Dingell bill, it is clear that a bipartisan majority in the House of Representatives is ready to vote for a strong and enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights.

The bipartisan Norwood-Dingell coalition has placed the needs of patients over the desires of special interests. It is long past time for the entire Congress to follow suit. I reiterate my call to Speaker Hastert to schedule a vote on this important legislation immediately upon return from the congressional recess in September.

NOTE: A portion of the President's statement was made available on the White House Press Office Radio Actuality Line.

**Remarks at a Fundraiser for
Martha's Vineyard Hospital in
Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts**
August 23, 1999

Thank you very much, Dr. Sullivan and Mike. I feel like I was in pretty distinguished company tonight with them up here. I admire them both very much. Lou Sullivan was an outstanding Secretary of Health and Human Services, a great advocate in our Nation's struggle against AIDS, and one thing I particularly appreciated, one of the early strong voices in our efforts to protect our children from the dangers of teen smoking. And I thank you for all you did there and for what you're doing here.

I have always admired Mike Wallace. I like him more when he's boring in on someone besides me. *[Laughter]* But I want to tell you that he made a profoundly moving presentation recently at Tipper Gore's National Conference on Mental Health, which we helped to put together and which is something Hillary and I care a lot about. And I think we are moving to the point in our country where we see mental health problems like other health problems. And when that day arrives, it will be in no small measure because Mike Wallace had the courage to speak out about it. And I thank him for that as well. *[Applause]* Thank you.

Now, I want to say again, although Mike already alluded to it, I'm sorry Hillary is not here, but she is a little under the weather. And I want her to get well because she has a rigorous schedule ahead of her. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank Congressman Delahunt for being here, and the other elected officials, and all the members of the hospital board and the people here at Farm Neck who have been so kind to me over the years.

I would like to say a few things in a very straightforward way about this issue before you tonight. I spent a lot of my life trying to keep hospitals open that serve small populations. And this hospital is an interesting situation because, as Dr. Sullivan said, there are 14,000 year-round residents here and then up to 10 times that many here on any given day in the summertime. So, for most of the year, it's a small rural hospital in a county in Massachusetts that doesn't have a

particularly high per capita income, where, according to the information I've been given, 20 percent of the people have no health insurance. And then there's the summer and all the rest of us who are reasonably blessed in life, or we wouldn't be able to afford to come to Martha's Vineyard in the summertime. *[Laughter]* And we all want it to stay open and to do well.

And most of us, when we come here, come here because we don't want to think about anything except maybe walking on the beach or taking a sail or fighting our limitations out on this golf course, or whatever. *[Laughter]* We don't want to think about anything else—unless, like Mike, we get kidney stones or something else happens to us. But the people who run the hospital and the people who work at the hospital, they have to deal with the economics of modern health care, with the dilemma of the population base, and with the fact that—you know, they're there all the time. They deliver babies; they perform emergency surgery; they take care of the elderly people year round. They do things that need doing.

And there's not a person under this tent tonight that might not need this hospital sometime. Now, the plain fact is that, given the economics of modern medical care, I know there's—I don't want to get into all the things that have been in the paper about this—I'm not sure George Soros, Bob Rubin, and Alan Greenspan together could make this thing pay every month, every year, unless people like you are willing to help keep it open.

Now, of course, everything should be run as well as possible. But I'm telling you, I've been dealing with this for 20 years now, and I've kept some hospitals open when I was a Governor of a rural State, and I've seen some close. I've won some, and I've lost some. And let me just give you a couple of things to think about.

First of all, this hospital serves a county here on Martha's Vineyard that has 20 percent uninsured. I'll bet you anything—and I know that there is a health access coalition working on this, but I'll bet you anything that there are children on this island who are eligible for the CHIP program—the Children's Health Insurance Program—that was one of