

REDBOOK

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REDBOOK

4.13.94

Dear Lisa & Karen:

Here's the galley of Mrs.
Clinton's piece, with the
changes incorporated.

I'll keep you posted if we
need to make cuts to fit. I'm
certainly hoping that can be
avoided.

All best,

Diane

We were utterly different. Like the characters in *Star Trek*, Virginia Kelley and I seemed to be from different planets.

The first time I met her was when Bill and I were students at Yale Law School and she came to New Haven, Connecticut, for a visit. I had never seen somebody in real life who wore false eyelashes every day.

Here was a woman who got up at four-thirty every morning to put on her makeup, had a broad streak of white hair down the middle of her head, wore rings on every finger, and bracelets and bangles on each arm.

If she seemed foreign to me, I seemed equally foreign to her. I refused to wear makeup. Even worse, my usual garb was the law school uniform of that era: bell-bottom jeans, boots or sandals, a work shirt or sweat-shirt. To describe that first meeting as culture shock is a gross understatement. We were products of such different times, experiences, and regional backgrounds. Neither of us could imagine that we had anything in common.

The most fortuitous thing for me was that her husband at the time, Jeff Dwire, was visiting too. He and I were also apparently different—he wore pastel leisure suits and had a well-coifed, bouffant hairstyle—but neither of us cared what the other looked like. We just hit it off and had a great time.

In the months after that New Haven visit, Jeff would call me periodically to chat. He turned out to be a kind of secret cheerleader for me. He would translate me to Virginia, and Virginia to me. And at least for awhile, Virginia tolerated me because she assumed I wouldn't be in the picture very long.

THEN BILL INVITED ME HOME TO HOT Springs. It was a trip I'll never forget. Instead of driving directly to his house, he took me on an eight-hour tour of some of his favorite places in Arkansas. We looked at beautiful scenery. We went to a place that sold the best fried pies in the state. We went to a great barbecue place.

We finally arrived, and my second meeting with Virginia turned out to be even chillier than the first. She could be civil to somebody who cut her own hair, wore thick glasses, no makeup, and bell bottom jeans. But having her son bring me home raised a whole new level of concern. Now she was worried.

To her I was a girl from the North, a

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Yankee. And I talked funny. Once again, Jeff Dwire was my biggest ally. After I left he would call and tell me not to worry, that Virginia would come around. While he was boosting me he was also persuading Virginia that even though she and I seemed totally different, we were actually considerably alike.

He was right. But it took a few years for Virginia and I to acknowledge and accept that we had a lot in common.

Years later I learned from reading in her autobiography, *Leading With My Heart*, about the moment when her view of me changed. She wrote that one day as she was driving from South Arkansas to Hot Springs she was overcome with a feeling that she was not treating me right and was endangering her relationship with her son. At that moment she resolved to put her feelings aside.

She knew that many mothers are unhappy with the women their sons bring home, no matter who they are. So she wrote me a letter and poured out her feelings. After that we began to correspond and spend more time together. And through sharing experiences we were able to overcome what, in the end, turned out to be superficial differences.

AS I LEARNED MORE ABOUT THE HARDSHIPS Virginia had endured, I respected her more and more. She was so strong. But more than that, she was an extraordinary example of resilience, persistence, and love.

And she relished having a good time. She loved to laugh. She loved to be around young people, especially her sons and their friends. She loved parties—the louder and livelier the better. I continually discovered wonderful personal characteristics in her.

It turned out that many of the things I loved about Bill were things I also loved about his mother.

When I first met Bill at Yale, I knew he was unusual. The way he put himself out for people. His ability to accept and tolerate those with different opinions. His optimistic, hopeful view of life. He would ask how your family was. If someone had lost his class notes, or had a family emergency, or got sick, he would stay up all night helping him study for an exam. These were traits he inherited from Virginia.

He is a glass-is-half-full person, just like his mother was. He sees the best in people and brings out the best

in them. It's one reason he has such strong, loyal friends, and perhaps why he has such strong enemies.

Virginia was that way too. One of her greatest attributes was that she did not shy away from controversy. She would stick up for people who had been pushed around or oppressed. If somebody was mistreating a waitress, for example, she would march up to them and tell them it wasn't right.

For people who were less secure, or more negative about life, she was a challenge and a threat. And I think Bill has that same capacity to enrage people who are negative and who like to exert power by stepping on others.

Being around Bill and his mother was a real education for me. I learned that no matter what happens to you, you've got a choice. You can be embittered, beaten down, negative. You can drag yourself out of bed in the morning dreading the day. Or you can just keep going with an optimistic, hopeful attitude that allows you to enjoy each day no matter what happens to you. That's what Virginia did. There was a buoyancy about her that never faded.

OVER THE YEARS I CAME TO BETTER understand how she chose to live her life.

I think she got her strength from her father. He adored her and she adored him. Although she had a difficult relationship with her mother, she grew up with a very loving father and a supportive extended family. And when she began to encounter adversity, she could tell herself she would get through it.

In some ways she didn't have any choice but to struggle through the bad times. After Bill's father died, she was a young widow with a baby. That's when she decided to become a nurse anesthetist, and she went back to nursing school. It was heartbreaking for her to be away from her son, but she left him with her parents so that she could advance her training and get a better nursing job.

Then she married Roger Clinton, who had a drinking problem. He was violent. It was a painful relationship for her, but divorce wasn't so easily accepted in those days. You were supposed to grit your teeth and bear it.

Eventually the pain became so intolerable that she felt she had to divorce Roger Clinton. But when he fell apart and begged her to take him back, she felt so sorry for him that she

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remarried him.

It's easy for women today to say she should have left a man who was abusing her. But in the culture in which she grew up, the way you showed strength was to keep going and keep the family together. You put that makeup on, you went to work, you helped your children with their homework, you made dinner. You showed the outside world that you were not going to be beaten down by personal hardships.

She was, by nature, a nurturer and a caretaker. She also loved men and the attention of men. And she thought men were, by the natural order of things, better suited to many roles in society. But she also realized that women have certain strengths that men don't necessarily recognize.

Later in life she became somewhat politicized about the sexism she endured in the medical field. Her awareness started with a movement to require nurse anesthetists to work under doctors instead of as freestanding medical professionals. Most nurse anesthetists were women. Most anesthesiologists were men. And she began to realize that some of the problems she encountered were because she was a woman.

Feminism certainly wasn't a cause for her, but she began to see the world around her in new ways. And she acted on her observations by supporting me and being very proud of my professional and public activities.

She also encouraged Chelsea to pursue whatever interests she had and to excel at whatever she chose. Of course, she was a doting grandmother. Virginia would take her shopping or out to dinner. They would read stories together. They would go fishing. They spent a lot of time together.

Chelsea learned a lot from her, just as I did. She will always remember her grandmother with tremendous affection and love, and will treasure Virginia's autobiography that was finished, despite a losing battle with cancer, as a last gift to a beloved granddaughter.

UNLIKE MANY PEOPLE, VIRGINIA didn't try to control her fate. She went with the flow. And in the end, she was really able to live life—and finish life—on her own terms.

When her breast cancer spread and her chances of surviving diminished greatly, she had a choice about whether to undergo experimental

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treatments that might have prolonged her life. But she had no desire to live longer if her life was going to be less fulfilling. In her view being incapacitated or being in excruciating pain was no way to live. She opted against these treatments.

In the time remaining, her life was full of fun and joy. She traveled. She worked on her autobiography. She came to visit us often at the White House and at Camp David, and spent her last Thanksgiving and Christmas with us. She went to Barbra Streisand's concert in Las Vegas at New Year's. Then, in January, she died in her sleep. I'm sure she died in peace.

Fortunately for me, I have never been beaten, or had to cope with an alcoholic spouse, or struggle against the kind of sexism that permeated her life as a working woman. I will never face the hardships she faced day after day and what millions of American women still face in their lives today.

But I also know that every one of us confronts challenges and obstacles of our own. At some point every one of us has to cope with grief and tragedy, with disappointment and disillusionment, with smaller and larger injustices, with crises we cannot predict or control.

As I go through my life, I think about Virginia often. Whenever I start to feel sorry for myself or feel wronged or feel angry, I think about her. I think about my wonderful, resilient husband, who is remarkably like her. I think about the way my daughter bubbles over with love and joy, just as her grandmother did. And I think about the courageous, ebullient life Virginia led and the example she left us.

Virginia's greatest legacy was to show that, even in the midst of personal trials and pain, you can and must keep going. Her lesson was that no matter how hard life gets, you get up in the morning, say a prayer, put a smile on your face, and go out and brave the world to do the best that you can—with or without false eyelashes.

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REDBOOK

KE Spoke
TO 4/6/94

April 5, 1994

Lisa Caputo
Office Of The First Lady

Dear Lisa:

First off, we all want to thank you and Mrs. Clinton so much for coming to Redbook with this piece, which is warm and inspiring and full of insight and humor. Indeed, Ellen Levine, the editor in chief, asked that you tell Mrs. Clinton that reading her piece yesterday really helped her keep perspective during what was an otherwise not very good day. So, our personal thanks as well.

We do have some questions, places where we feel the piece is crying out for specific examples, where it needs to show more than tell. A number of key points are only alluded to, and much of the action remains off-stage. Bringing these to life a bit more will make the evolution of their relationship that much more vivid. I've written these right on the page, and while it looks like a lot, many of them hit on the same themes: characterizing more fully why Mrs. Kelly seemed not to like Hillary Rodham in the beginning, characterizing in more detail what was so chilly about their early meetings. We're not looking to add pages of length to this; a number of well-placed clarifications and amplifications throughout, sentences or paragraphs at most, should do the trick.

We are committed to getting this into the July issue, (which will also keep us clear of any timing conflict with S&S) so the clock is now ticking very loudly. It would be wonderful if we could have these additions by the end of this week (4/8). Is that within the realm of possibility?

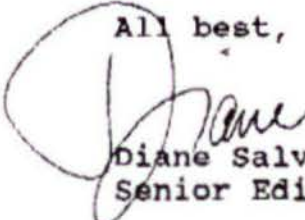
That also brings us to the photos. We'd love to have a selection--with an eye toward ultimately running perhaps 4 or 5. Is there a photo with Mrs. Kelly from the very early days, before Mrs. Clinton was married? Is there a wedding photo? Is there a photo of Mrs. Kelly with Mrs. Clinton holding Chelsea as a newborn? Our aim is to try to match the chronology of their growing bond in photos, as the piece does in words. Again, you have my word that we'll handle the photos with the utmost care and return them--each and every one--as soon as they are back from the printer.

*
Caputo

Please give me a call when you've had a chance to read this and let me know if there are any problems or questions, and how you think we'll fare with our deadline situation. I so appreciated your keeping me updated all last week and this weekend. We're so much better able to cope--especially down to the wire like this--if we know what to anticipate.

Again, we're so pleased and honored to be able to have this piece by Mrs. Clinton. We feel sure readers will warm to its timeless message.

All best,



Diane Salvatore
Senior Editor

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
LESSONS OF LIFE FROM VIRGINIA KELLEY
REDBOOK MAGAZINE

FINAL DRAFT

We were utterly different. Like the characters in Star Trek, Virginia Kelley and I seemed to be from different planets.

The first time I met her was when Bill and I were students at Yale Law School and she came to New Haven for a visit. I had never seen somebody in real life who wore false eyelashes every day.

Here was a woman who got up at 4:30 every morning to put on her make-up, had a broad streak of white hair down the middle of her head, wore rings on every finger, and bracelets and bangles on each arm.

If she seemed foreign to me, I seemed equally foreign to her. I refused to wear make-up. And even worse, my usual garb was the law school uniform of that era: bell bottom blue jeans, boots or sandals, a work shirt or sweat shirt.

To describe our first meeting as culture shock is a gross understatement.

We were products of such different times, experiences, upbringings, and regional backgrounds. Neither of us could imagine that we had anything in common.

The most fortuitous thing for me was that her husband at the time, Jeff Dwire, was there too. He and I were also apparently different -- he wore pastel leisure suits and had a well-coiffed, bouffant hairstyle -- but neither of us cared what the other looked like. We just hit it off and had a great time.

In the months after that New Haven visit, Jeff would call me periodically and we would chat. He turned out to be my secret supporter, kind of a cheerleader for me. He would translate me to Virginia, and Virginia to me.

And, at least for awhile, Virginia tolerated me in part because she assumed that I wouldn't be in the picture very long.

Then Bill invited me home to Hot Springs. It was a trip that I will never forget.

Bill picked me up at the airport in Little Rock, which is about an hour from

was it
clear here
that Bill
& Hillary
were
serious?

had Bill
Clinton
said anything
to her by way
of preparation
what did
Mrs. Clinton
(Hillary)
know of
how close
Bill's
relationship
was with
his mother?

Clearly Bill
is not so fond of her
State for him?
implies that
she needed
support again
V. Kelly's
opposition
need to have
more of a sense
of V. Kelly's
objections
was it really only
innocent + no
makeup? what kind
woman did V. Kelly have
in mind for her son?
more traditional?

example?
"You know, when
she says X, she
doesn't mean to
hurt you..."?

autobiography which was finished, despite a losing battle with cancer, as a last gift to a beloved granddaughter.

* * *

Unlike many people, Virginia didn't try to control her fate. She went with the flow. And in the end, she was really able to live life -- and finish life -- on her own terms.

When her breast cancer spread and her chances of surviving diminished greatly, she had a choice as to whether to undergo certain experimental treatments that might have prolonged her life. But she had no desire to live longer if her life was going to be less fulfilling. In her view, being an invalid, or being incapacitated, or being in excruciating pain, was no way to live.

She opted against these treatments. And in the time remaining, her life was full of fun and joy. She traveled. She worked on her autobiography. She came to visit us often at the White House and at Camp David and spent her last Thanksgiving and Christmas with us. She went to Barbra Streisand's concert in Las Vegas at New Year's. Then, in January, she died in her sleep. And I'm sure she died in peace.

Fortunately for me, I have never been beaten, or had to cope with an alcoholic spouse, or struggle against the kind of sexism that permeated her life when she was coming up as a working woman. I will never face what she faced day after day and what millions of American women still face in their lives today.

But I also know that every one of us confronts challenges and obstacles of our own. At some point, every one of us has to cope with grief and tragedy, with disappointment and disillusionment, with smaller and larger injustices, with crises we cannot predict or control.

As I go through my life I think about Virginia often. Whenever I start to feel sorry for myself, or feel wronged, or feel angry, I think about her. I think about my wonderful, resilient husband, who is remarkably like her. I think about the way my daughter bubbles over with love and joy, just as she did. And I think about the courageous, ebullient life she led and the example she left us. *her grandmother(?)*

Virginia's greatest legacy was to show that, even in the midst of personal trials and pain, you can and must keep going. Her lesson was that no matter how hard life gets, you get up in the morning, say a prayer, put a smile on your face, and go out and brave the world to do the best that you can -- with or without false eyelashes.

Can we have a current reference to ground this in some specifics?

nursing school. It was heartbreaking to her to be away from her son, but she left him with her parents so that she could advance her training and get a better nursing job.

Then she married Roger Clinton, and he had a drinking problem. He was violent. It was a painful relationship for her, but divorce wasn't so easily accepted in the South -- or anywhere -- in those days. You were supposed to work through difficulties. You were supposed to grit your teeth and bear it.

Eventually the pain became so intolerable that she felt she had to divorce Roger Clinton. But when he fell apart and begged her to take him back, she felt so sorry for him that she remarried him.

I think it's easy for women today to say she should have left a man who was abusing her. But in the culture in which she grew up, the way you showed strength was to keep going and to keep the family together.

You put that make-up on, you went to work, you went to your children's events at school, you helped them with their homework, you made dinner. You showed the outside world that you were not going to be beaten down by life whatever your personal hardships might be.

She was also, by nature, a nurturer and a caretaker. She loved men and she loved the attention of men. And she thought men were by the natural order of things better suited to many roles in society. But she also realized that women have certain strengths that men don't necessarily recognize.

Later in her career she became somewhat politicized about the sexism she endured in the medical field. It started with a movement to require nurse anesthetists to work under doctors instead of as free-standing medical professionals. Most nurse anesthetists were women. Most anesthesiologists were men. And she began to realize that some of the problems she encountered were because she was a woman.

Feminism certainly wasn't a cause for her. But she began to see the world around her in new ways. And she acted on her observations by supporting me in what I did and being very proud of my professional and public activities.

She also encouraged Chelsea to pursue whatever interests she had and to excel at whatever she chose. Of course, she was a doting grandmother, just as grandmothers are supposed to be. Starting when Chelsea was a little girl, Virginia would take her to her house, or take her shopping or out to dinner. They would read stories together. They would go fishing. They spent a lot of time together.

Chelsea learned a lot from her, just as I did. She will always remember her grandmother with tremendous affection and love, and will treasure Virginia's

Some of this
a factor in
why she
didn't get
along at
Shut - because
Kitty (Clinton)
did not show
these assets
And if not, then?
kind of wife?
implies the
she didn't
support her
professional
aspirations
before the
True?

Chelsea's
was owned
by her
Can we
fuller sense?

It turned out that many of the things I loved about Bill were things I loved about his mother.

When I first met Bill at Yale, I knew he was unusual. He would ask how your family was. If someone had lost their class notes, or had a family emergency, or gotten sick, he would stay up all night helping them study for an exam. He stood out from everyone else there because of his personal warmth toward people.

These were traits he inherited from Virginia, sort of genetic transmissions from her. The way he cared for people and put himself out for people. His ability to accept and tolerate those with different views and opinions. His optimistic, hopeful view of life, no matter the circumstances.

He is a glass-is-half-full person, just like his mother was. He sees the best in people and brings out the best in those around him. It's one reason he has such strong, loyal friends, and perhaps why he has strong enemies.

She was that way too. One of her greatest attributes was that she did not shy away from controversy. She would stick up for people who had been pushed around or oppressed. If somebody was mistreating a waitress, for example, she would march up to them and tell them it wasn't right.

For people who were less secure, or more negative about life, she was a challenge. A threat. And I think Bill has that same capacity to enrage people who are negative and who like to exert power by stepping on others.

Being around people like Bill and his mother was a real education for me. I learned that no matter what happens to you, you've got a choice. You can be embittered, beaten down, negative. You can drag yourself out of bed in the morning dreading the day. Or, facing the same circumstances, you can just keep going with an optimistic, resilient, hopeful attitude that allows you to enjoy each day no matter what happens to you.

That's what Virginia did. There was a buoyancy about her that never faded. And over the years I came to understand more how she chose to live her life.

I think she got her strength from her father. He adored her and she adored him. Although she had a difficult relationship with her mother, she grew up with a very loving father and a supportive extended family. And when she began to encounter adversity, she could tell herself she would get through it.

In some ways, she didn't have any choice but to struggle through the bad times. After Bill's father died, she was a young widow with a baby. She had to keep going. That's when she decided to become a nurse anesthetist, and she went back to

Can we
give a few
reference
points
- which she has
something in
the paper
about her or Bill
etc...

Can we give
more phrase to
the 3 leaves

Hot Springs. Instead of driving directly to his house, he took me on an eight-hour tour of some of his favorite places in Arkansas. We looked at beautiful scenery. We went to a place that sold the best fried pies in the state. We went to a great barbecue place. In other words, we ate and sight-saw our way to Hot Springs.

We finally arrived, and my second meeting with Virginia turned out to be even chillier than the first. She could be civil to somebody who cut her own hair, wore thick glasses, no make-up, and bell bottom jeans. But having her son bring me home raised a whole new level of concern. Then she was worried.

To her, I was a girl from the North, a Yankee. And I talked funny.

Once again, Jeff Dwire was my biggest ally. After I left, he would call me and tell me not to worry. He would tell me that Virginia was going to come around. *did Bill ever say words to that effect, too?*

While he was boosting me, he was also persuading Virginia that even though she and I looked totally different, we were actually considerably alike. *in what ways?*

He was right. But it took a few years for Virginia and me to acknowledge and accept that we had a lot in common.

Years later, I learned from her autobiography, Leading With My Heart, that there was one moment when her view of me changed. As she relates in her book, she was driving from South Arkansas to Hot Springs and she was overcome with a feeling that she was not treating me right and was endangering her relationship with her son. At that moment she resolved to put her feelings aside.

She knew that many mothers are unhappy with the women their sons bring home, no matter who they are. So she wrote me a letter and poured out her feelings. After that we began to correspond and talk more. We spent more time together. And through sharing experiences, we were able to overcome what, in the end, turned out to be rather superficial differences.

As I got to know her and learn more about the hardships she had endured in her life, I respected her more and more. She was so strong. But more than that, she was an extraordinary example of resilience, persistence, and love.

And she relished having a good time. She loved to laugh. She loved to be around young people, especially her sons and their friends. She loved parties - the louder and livelier the better. I continually discovered wonderful personal characteristics in her.

* * *

Need to see by examples how these meetings were chilly. They said but a few words to each other. The barely sat in the same room?

indeed, had been not sitting along with a strain?

Can we quote a few lines from it? (Per St S, it's standard to be able to use a few lines in a review or comment. Further, the letter was to HRC.)

was first page, this was really all? Maybe these things were a set of assumptions, things that were more substantial?

As above, what had actually transpired?

again, we need to have made her feelings more clear

WHY WE MUST GUARANTEE HEALTH COVERAGE TO EVERY AMERICAN

Together, we confront a historic moment. It is a moment when we ask ourselves: are we going to join every other industrialized country and guarantee health coverage to all our citizens? The President's answer is "Yes, we must," and I believe that we will.

Whether or not we seize this moment will tell us about our willingness as a nation to take the necessary steps to renew our strength and vitality. After all, unless we guarantee coverage to everyone, we will not achieve real health security; control skyrocketing health costs; free doctors and nurses to concentrate on practicing medicine; and reward work. This is a critical test of who we are as a people and a nation, a test we can not afford to fail.

We all agree that America has the best medical care in the world; that is not what this debate is about. And though this debate is, to a certain extent, about the way we finance health care, it is also much bigger than that. It is a debate about what kind of a country we are and intend to be.

Guaranteeing every American health care, first and foremost, is about security for all of us, not only the 58 million Americans who lack coverage at some point each year. None of us, with the exception of those already eligible for Medicare, can know that this time next month, or next year, we will still have affordable insurance. None of us under the age of 65 has that security. None of us can predict the state of our health. None of us knows when an accident may occur.

When Americans don't feel secure about their health coverage, they stay in jobs that they would otherwise leave because they fear losing their health coverage. They stay on welfare, where medical benefits are guaranteed. And this lack of security hurts the people who are the most vulnerable -- young families and working women. That's why guaranteed private insurance for everyone must be the cornerstone of health reform.

Some people argue that we can achieve reforms like "portability" -- taking your insurance with you even if you lose your job or change jobs -- without guaranteeing coverage to everyone. But as Senator Chafee has rightly pointed out, you can't very well achieve portability without universal coverage. Insurance isn't very "portable" for a person who has just lost his or her job if, suddenly, they are responsible for the full cost of their old health coverage.

The importance of guaranteed coverage for everyone goes beyond security to the issue of controlling skyrocketing health care costs. As a nation, we spend more money per person than any other by far, and yet we don't guarantee coverage to all our citizens. Without reform, rising health care costs will threaten the already strained budgets of our families, businesses, and state and federal governments.

If we do not insure everyone, we will continue to see "cost-shifting" -- where those of us who are insured pay higher premiums and increased taxes to make up for the uncompensated care costs of those who do not pay for themselves. Businesses that provide insurance to their employees will continue to pay for those who do not. Costs will continue

to spiral.

The evidence is overwhelming. In New York state, for example, insurance reforms in the absence of universal coverage raised costs by as much as 35%. As health policy experts Ted Marmor and Jerry Mashaw of Yale put it, "cost control becomes easier when the plan is universal, not harder." Or, as the Wall Street Journal pointed out, the cost of a standard benefits package when everyone is covered is 19% less than it would be if some people were left unprotected. Universal coverage is not just important to security -- it is an economic imperative.

Guaranteeing private insurance to every American will not only make our people and our economy healthier, but also give doctors, nurses and other health professionals the time they need to concentrate on practicing medicine -- instead of dealing with insurance company red tape and bureaucracy. With everyone covered, we can have a single claims form -- instead of today's different forms from over 1500 insurance companies. With a standard, comprehensive benefits package, doctors won't have to hire more people to sit on the phone with the insurance companies to haggle over what's covered and what's not.

Health care providers also won't have to worry constantly about getting reimbursed for their work. Today, doctors, hospitals and other health professionals are sometimes forced to turn away patients because the patients have no insurance and no ability to pay for services. No doctor should ever be put in such a situation. With everyone guaranteed coverage (and providers guaranteed reimbursement), doctors, nurses and hospitals will be

able to return to their traditional role: caring for the patient -- no matter what.

Guaranteeing coverage is also important to restoring an old-fashioned American value -- the importance of hard work. Today's system rewards welfare over work. If you're on welfare, you're guaranteed health coverage for yourself and your family. But if you want to leave welfare and get a job, you put your family's health security at risk.

Think of the message that we send to literally millions and millions of working Americans. Under the present system, we tell people very clearly, "If you are lucky enough to work for someone who will help you with your insurance, or if you are poor enough and down on your luck enough to qualify for government assistance, then you'll have health security. But, if you're in the middle and you get up every day and work for a living and you cannot afford health insurance yourself, you're out of luck." No hard working American citizen should have to go on welfare to provide health care for their children; guaranteed private insurance for everyone will stop this from ever happening again.

When our work is done, we will no longer have to hear heartbreaking stories like the one I heard in Cleveland from a woman who was holding one of her two daughters who have chronic illnesses. She told me about a conversation she had with an insurance company representative as she was trying to find health coverage for her daughters. The insurance company representative told her: "There isn't any coverage available for your daughters because, after all, we don't insure burning buildings." Imagine how that young mother felt, and ask yourself if we can continue to live with a health care system that treats

sick children as risks that are best avoided.

It has been an honor for me to participate in this historic debate. I've had the privilege of travelling around our great nation and sitting down with hundreds and hundreds of concerned citizens. I've heard story after story of what our broken health care system does every day to hard-working Americans. It breeds insecurity, threatens our economic future, stands at odds with our values, and sometimes tears apart families.

I know we can do better. I believe America can and will do what we know is right. And when we guarantee health security to every American, I want to be able to go back to all the wonderful people I've met -- just as members of Congress will be able to go back to their constituents -- and say: "We have just passed a bill that guarantees that you will never lose your health coverage for the rest of your life." That will truly be a historic moment.

As an American citizen concerned about the health of our nation, I stand with you as we confront this challenge that touches all of us. I am convinced we can achieve lasting, meaningful change. And with the hard work of this Congress, we will do it this year.