

Let me tell you, Mr. President, just a little more about Chancellor Hooker and what he has done for my State of North Carolina.

He was the first person in his family to get a college degree—a philosophy degree from Chapel Hill in 1969. His father was a coal miner. He always credited his parents' belief in hard work and good education for his own success.

After graduation, he left North Carolina to get a graduate degree and to enter the world of academics. He taught philosophy at Harvard. He was president of Bennington College and also president of the University of Massachusetts system. He was president of the University of Maryland at Baltimore County.

He returned to North Carolina in July of 1995 to become UNC's eighth chancellor. And he really attacked the job. One year he visited every single county in North Carolina—and we have 100 counties in North Carolina—to make sure that every person in the State knew they were connected with their university. Then he made sure that the faculty and administration at UNC were connected to the State. He once took the new faculty and administrators from other States on a week-long bus tour of North Carolina.

The truth of the matter is that men like Michael Hooker have long lists of accomplishments. They serve on many blue ribbon panels; they get lots of honorary degrees; they write great scholarly pieces; they are placed on many "best of" lists. I could go through a great deal of these with respect to Chancellor Hooker, because he accomplished all of those things.

But in the end, I think Michael Hooker himself valued people most. I believe he would like to be remembered for all of the things he did to make people's lives better. He understood the need for education, not only because it expands men's and women's minds but because it makes our society better, stronger, more prosperous, and more equitable. He was an extraordinary and wonderful man.

He said it best himself, if I could just quote him:

There is only one reason to have a public university, and that is to serve the people of the state. That should be the touchstone of everything we do: whether it's in the interest of North Carolina and our citizens. Our litmus test is the question: Is what we do in Chapel Hill helping the factory worker in Kannapolis?

The best tribute we can give him is all the good works performed in the future by those who were touched by him and his life. Chancellor Hooker was an extraordinary man. He will be missed by me, he will be missed by every single citizen in North Carolina, and he will be missed by all those who knew him.

With that, I yield the floor, Mr. President.

Mr. WELLSTONE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Let me just thank the Senator from North Carolina. Having been an undergraduate at the University of North Carolina, having done my doctorate work there, having had two children born in Chapel Hill, and having known Chancellor Hooker, I am also very sorry to hear of his death—a very young man. It is really a loss for North Carolina and the country. I appreciate the Senator's eloquence.

There are other Senators on the floor, so I am going to try to be brief and take only an hour or so—less than that, much less than that.

THE FARM CRISIS

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, first of all, coming from an agricultural State, I just want to, as I think Richard Nixon would say, make one thing "perfectly clear" about agriculture.

Senator DORGAN is right on the mark when he makes the point. It is sort of an inside thing, but it is very important to the outsiders, especially to farmers, and not just to farmers but to those of us who come from farm States. If yesterday the majority leader had been successful on the cloture vote, we would not have been able to bring this amendment to the floor on this ag bill that calls for an additional \$6.5 billion of assistance.

Let me just say that this ag appropriations bill that just funds existing USDA programs will not do the job. Let me also say, in my State of Minnesota, and I will not talk about a lot of statistics that I could talk about farm income having dropped 40 percent over the last several years. I could talk about this last decade where farmers have been wondering why they see a 35-percent drop in price, and yet the consumer price goes up while the farm-retail spread grows wider and wider between what farmers make and consumers pay. We want to know what is going on. Let me just tell you, in my State there are a lot of broken lives and a lot of broken dreams and a lot of broken families.

Let me also just simply say that time is not neutral; time moves on. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. If we do not get this additional assistance to farmers, much of it directly related to income loss because of record low prices, then a lot of farmers are not going to be able to live to farm another day.

We have to get this assistance to farmers. It has to be in this ag appropriations bill. I will tell you something. I do not even like coming out here and fighting for additional bailout for farmers or additional credit assistance, because most of the farmers in North Carolina and Minnesota, and around the country, are not interested in bailout money. They are interested in being able to get a decent price. That's what they are interested in.

Let me go on. Let me say, again, this appropriations bill will be an appro-

priations bill that will really help. This amendment calls for this additional \$6.5 billion in assistance.

Second point: I do not know what the press conference was about here in Washington. I was back home with a lot of farmers. There were a lot of people from all around the State who came together for a gathering at the capital. But I will tell you this. I hope that some of the folks who held the press conference also talked about how we can make sure that family farms have a future several years from now. I think we have to speak the truth. And the truth of the matter is, this Freedom to Farm bill of 1996 is a freedom to fail bill.

The fundamental crisis is a crisis of price. Right now our corn growers get \$1.75 at the local elevator; our wheat growers get \$3.13 for wheat. This is nowhere near the cost of production. They cannot cash flow. They cannot make a living. Unless we fix this freedom to fail bill and we go back to some sort of leverage for farmers in the marketplace, some kind of safety net which will give them a decent income, some sort of price stability, our family farmers do not have any future. That is what this is all about.

I am not interested in semantics. If people want to say, I am still for the Freedom to Farm bill, I don't care. But I will say this. The flexibility in that legislation to farm a whole lot of different crops does not do any good if there are record low prices for all of them. So let's get the assistance to people so they can survive.

But let's get beyond the short run, and let's be honest with one another. Let's fix that Freedom to Farm, or freedom to fail, bill, and let's make sure there is some price stability and there is some farm income out there; otherwise, our family farmers have no future.

Finally, if there was a press conference yesterday, I sure as heck hope there was some focus on the distortions in the market. I would like to join all my Republican colleagues in calling for putting free enterprise back into the food industry. I would like to join with all of my Republican colleagues in being a true Adam Smith apostle and calling for a market economy. I would like to join with all my Republican colleagues, in other words, in calling for some antitrust action.

How in the world can our family farmers make it when you have four large firms, the packers dominating the livestock farmers, the grain companies dominating the grain farmers? There has to be some fair competition. Everywhere our family farmers turn, whether it is from whom they buy or to whom they sell, we do not have the competition.

Let's really be on the side of these family farmers and insist on some competition. Let's have the courage to take on some of these conglomerates that have muscled their way to the dinner table exercising their raw political power over our producers and over

our consumers, and, I say to the Chair, who is my friend, I think over the taxpayers as well.

So I am all for a focus on family farmers. This is a crisis all in capital letters. I hope we will have some action. But I want to make it crystal clear, I think these are the issues that are at stake.

PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I also want to make it crystal clear that I have been proud to join with my Democratic colleagues out here on the floor; and the sooner we have Republican colleagues joining us, the better. We have been focusing on the importance of patient protection legislation. Protection of medical records privacy is very important to the American people. I hope we will have an opportunity to debate the Patients' Bill of Rights because I want to offer an amendment for segregation of records. The right to privacy is deeply rooted in American culture. American citizens expect that we will continue that tradition.

This amendment allows a person to segregate any type or amount of protected health information, and limit the use or disclosure of the segregated health information to those people specifically designated by the person. I want to just give one more example and, in this small example, tell a larger story.

It would allow a person, any of us, to take some of the particular private health information, and make sure it is not a part of a total record by segmenting it off and preserving privacy. We are getting more and more worried about genetic testing. For example, if you are talking about a woman who has genetic testing for breast cancer, she may fear the results if she thinks the life insurance companies are going to get ahold of this information or employers are going to get ahold of this information. She might not want to even be a part of this testing.

We want to protect the privacy rights of people. The same thing could be said for people who are talking to their doctor about mental health problems or substance abuse problems. The same can be said on a whole range of other issues.

There is the whole question of making sure ordinary citizens have some privacy rights, some protection in terms of who gets to see their medical records and who doesn't, making sure it is not abused. I will give a perfect example. I have never said this on the floor, but I will to make a larger point, I had two parents with Parkinson's disease. Research is now showing there is probably some genetic predisposition. As we move forward with this research, I may want to be a part of whatever kind of test or pilot project is put together by doctors. But maybe I wouldn't, if I thought there would be no way that, whatever their research suggested, that I wouldn't have some right to ensure I had some protection.

The right to privacy is relevant for the potential for genetic map research, for testing, and, for that matter, treatment, for maybe even finding cures for diseases. There are a lot of people who are not going to want to be a part of it, and there are a lot of people who are going to worry about that information if we don't have the privacy rights.

Conclusion: The pendulum has swung too far. I think we should be talking about universal health care coverage as well, and we will. At the moment, here is what we are faced with.

In the last several years, since we were stalemated on every kind of major national health insurance legislation or universal health care coverage bill, major changes have taken place in health care, not here in Washington but in the country. They have been revolutionary in their impact on people. The pendulum has swung too far. We have now moved toward an increasingly bureaucratized, corporatized, impersonal medicine where the bottom line has become the only line, where you have a few large insurance companies that own and dominate the majority of the managed care plans to the point where consumers, ordinary people, the people we represent want to know where they fit in. Right now they don't believe they fit in at all.

So without going into all the specifics, because we have been talking about this for a week, what people in the country have been saying is, if you want to do a good job of representing us, please make sure we have some protection for ourselves and our children to make sure we will be able to get the care we need and deserve. That is what we hear from the patients. That is what we hear from the consumers.

What we hear from the providers, the care givers, is, Senators, we are no longer able to practice the kind of medical care we thought we would be able to practice when we went to medical school or nursing school. We have become demoralized. Demoralized care givers are not good care givers. So we have a lot of work to do to make sure we have families in our States getting the health care they deserve. That is what this debate is all about.

We have been trying for a week to get some commitment from the majority party that we would have a substantive debate. That is the Senate. I hope that we will have an agreement. I hope we can come back to this. I hope we will have an agreement, and then I hope we can have the substantive debate and Senators can bring amendments to the floor.

There are several amendments I am very interested in, and probably a number of other Senators have amendments they are interested in. We will vote them up or down. We will all be accountable. We will all do what we think is right for the people in our States.

The point is, we are not going to accept not being able to come to the floor and fight for people we represent on

such an important question. That is what last week was about. That is what the beginning of this week is about.

I hope there will soon be an agreement. I hope there will soon be a debate. My hope is that before it is all over, we can pass a good piece of legislation that will not be an insurance company protection act but will be a consumer or patient protection act.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. BOXER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Minnesota. Before he leaves the floor, I say to my friend that he pointed out we have been talking about this for a week solid. I came down to the floor today to talk about how we have been fighting this for over 2 years. We have increased and we have escalated the debate in the last week, but I asked my staff to go through my earliest talks on this subject.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Will the Senator yield?

Mrs. BOXER. Yes.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Tiffany Stedman, who is an intern, and Carol Rest-Mincberg, who is a fellow, be granted the privilege of the floor today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. BOXER. I know we are running short of time so I will be glad to yield to my colleagues for questions.

On January 28, 1998, I came to the floor and talked about the case in my State of a gentleman named Harry Christie who had a very poignant story to tell me about his daughter who, when she was 9 years old, was diagnosed with a very malignant and dangerous tumor in her kidney. It was explained to Mr. Christie that there were only a couple of surgeons who knew how to operate on this kind of a tumor, and it would cost \$50,000 for the operation.

He went to his HMO. He said to them: Look, this is my flesh and blood, my daughter. She means everything to me. I am assuming the HMO will allow me to go out of the plan, get the specialist, and then the HMO will pay the specialist.

They said: No, we have good oncologists on our staff. We have good physicians, and they will handle it.

He said to them: Did they ever do this kind of pediatric surgery?

No, they had never done it in their lives.

And Mr. Christie said: This is an impossible situation, and I won't accept this.

They said: Then too bad. You will have to pay for it yourself.

Well, that is exactly what he did. It was not easy.

What about parents who can't do that? What happens to their child?

This is just one story. I told it January 28, 1998. By the way, the end of the