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REMARKS BY THE FIRST LADY
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LAS VEGAS

GOVERNOR MILLER: -- reexamine health care as it relates to Nevada and our country. The focus of health care was evident in the President's outstanding address earlier in the week in his state of the union.

As all of you know, at that time, he used as an example two Renoites who are with us here now. Richard and Judy Anderson have joined us and have now had some chance to visit with the First Lady and with the Senator and the Congressman and with my wife, Sandy, and I.

We're pleased that they were here. And I think that, as the First Lady said earlier, they evidenced the fact, as did the individuals we saw earlier today, that health care is a great concern in our state, that our problems are not uniquely different than other parts of the country, and that's why it's so important that there be a national plan for health care.

And we are so fortunate to have a President and a First Lady who have dedicated their efforts and concerns to achieving that so that we don't have more horror stories like we heard earlier today or like we heard from the President about the Andersons.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I just wanted to reinforce what the governor has just said and what we all said earlier at the hospital and at the forum. There is a health care crisis, and we only have to actually talk to people and listen and see what they're going through to know that there is. And it's not a crisis that affects somebody else. It's one that could affect any one of us at any time.

The vast majority of people who are uninsured work every day for a living. People who are insured cannot with

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any confidence say that they will be insured for the same kind of insurance at the same cost this time next year, because they don't know if they'll have the same job they have; they don't know if their employer will continue to help pay for health care; they don't know what the benefits that will be given to them are; and they don't know what the price they'll have to pay is.

So health care that is always there for everybody is something the President wants to make an absolute part of American life. And we can then worry about other things, because we won't have to worry about what happens when you get sick or you lose your job. And that's our greatest hope.

And I would love to have the Andersons say anything they would like.

MR. ANDERSON: I just have one thing I would like to say, and I would like to thank the President and Mrs. Clinton for putting forth all the effort they have in trying to solve this problem. I appreciate it.

GOVERNOR MILLER: Questions?

MS. MORRISON: Mrs. Clinton, I'm Jane Morrison from the Las Vegas Journal.

You heard an example today about the epidural situation. And after we came out of there, one of the doctors came and said, "Well, an epidural is something you wouldn't be able to get under the Canadian system." However, one cringes at not getting that. This doctor told me that is not provided.

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I don't know anything about that. I just can't imagine as a woman not being able to have access to that if I needed it. And, if you're insured, you can get it in America. I don't care about any other country. If you're insured, you can get it. But this woman was not insured.

So she would have to reach into her pocket. And I was told at the hospital that that one shot would cost \$1,200. And this woman, as she explained, last time she had a baby, she needed two of them.

Now, when you're in a position in America because

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you don't have health insurance that you can't get what your neighbor who does have health insurance has and you, therefore, have to make some very tough decisions, I don't think that's right. And there ought to be a way that everybody who works in this country is entitled to guaranteed private health insurance, which is what the President said.

I'm not worried about any other country. I'm worried about America and Americans. And we have millions of people like the Andersons who get up every day, work hard, pay their taxes, do what we expect citizens to do, and then get pushed into bankruptcy or go without health care or have to make a decision like this woman that we met this morning at the hospital.

We have enough money in our health care system right now to take care of the American health care needs. We just don't spend it right, and we don't make the right decisions about how to get everybody into our health care system. And that's what the President's going to do, and then people won't have to make those decisions.

A PARTICIPANT: Mrs. Clinton, would you permit me to speak?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, always, Senator.

A PARTICIPANT: Jane, this is a typical backward response. (Inaudible) the Congress and the President have got to solve the Canadian single care system. It's a small minority of the members of the House and the Senate that want the Canadian system. No one, especially President Clinton, wants a single care system. When your position was -- when you responded in that way, it was the presentation made by the President in the state of the union or, certainly, the presentation made today.

We do not favor a single care system. We favor improving the system we now have in the ways outlined by the First Lady.

A PARTICIPANT: You do favor a system where there will only be so many resources.

MRS. CLINTON: That's not true. That's not true.

A PARTICIPANT: That's simply not true.

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MRS. CLINTON: You know, I appreciate legitimate questions like the ones we have heard at the forum today. I told the Senator and the Congressman and the Governor that I have been in forums all over the country. I thought that what I heard today were some of the best, most honest questions about people's concerns that I've heard anywhere in the country.

But you'll notice that they were questions about how can we make this work better. They weren't questions that were posed for political or ideological reasons to prevent any change in the status quo. And the Senator's absolutely right. There are a lot of people out there who, for good or bad reasons, like the system that we have now because it has made them a good living, they don't want to have to change, so they come up with questions or comments or attacks that are just not based on reality at all.

And anyone who has actually looked at what the President has proposed would never ask that question, because what we're proposing is to spend more money on health care. We're asking people to put more money in the health care system. But we're asking that it be done fairly and give everybody guaranteed private health insurance, so that everybody can take advantage of the world's best health care system and pay their fair share.

So we'll put our plan and proposal up against anybody's. But you'll notice that a lot of these people ask these questions -- they don't come forward with alternatives, they don't really analyze what's happening, they won't really answer the hard questions. They just want to attack. They're naysayers. They're nitpickers. They don't care about the people the President cares about, the people that this governor and this Congressman and this Senator care about. And we do.

So we're going to the mat on this because the American people deserve quality, affordable health care. And that's what we're going to give them.

GOVERNOR MILLER: Let me just add what you mentioned earlier, that this state has more to gain on a percentage basis by this plan than any other state because we have a higher percentage of uninsured in our state than any other state. And the fact is, the plan also provides for a great deal of economy within a state.

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We're also a state which has had longer and more extensive health maintenance organizations than any other state, so we're a step ahead in being able to facilitate the premise of the basic outline of the plan.

A PARTICIPANT: Governor Miller, I believe earlier, Mrs. Clinton said that we're still -- that one in four people in Nevada are uninsured. Can you tell us a little bit about how we got in that shape?

GOVERNOR MILLER: Basically, because we have a lack of insurance by many of the businesses. Three out of four of the uninsureds in Nevada are working or have a family member who is working, and they are employed in a situation in which they don't have insurance. And, essentially, that's how it derived as it does.

A PARTICIPANT: I would like to ask the Andersons a question. Did you expect your letter to get this sort of a response? Could you move up to the microphone, please?

MR. ANDERSON: That was shock number one. We received a call sometime later after that from Mrs. Clinton's aides to use it in their subcommittee meetings. And that was something. (Inaudible). And then, we heard a second time from Mrs. Clinton. (Inaudible). I don't know what else to say. I'm exhausted.

A PARTICIPANT: What about you, Mrs. Anderson? What was your thought on the fact that the President did respond? And now, they're here, and you're actually getting to meet them and tell them firsthand about your problems?

MRS. ANDERSON: I was flabbergasted. I'm excited, now. I would like to say thank you so far for all this recognition.

A PARTICIPANT: Time for one more question.

A PARTICIPANT: Do you think the plan that has been presented is in the right direction? You have been through the worst of it. You're a prime example of what this Administration is talking about.

MRS. ANDERSON: My main concern is so that everyone can enjoy health care.

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MR. ANDERSON: And lowering the costs of medical supplies, doctor's costs, x-rays, technician's costs. If we can lower that, then everyone will be more (inaudible). Small businesses, that's how they're (inaudible) can support something like that, make it affordable for them. Then, we won't have this (inaudible).

MRS. ANDERSON: Even when I was in the hospital for the 21 days and had the care, I was told later that I had about 30 CT scans.

MR. ANDERSON: We got a bill for about \$8,200 on that.

A PARTICIPANT: Just the CT scan?

MR. ANDERSON: The CT scans. The DX x-rays were about \$2,900.

A PARTICIPANT: What was your total medical bill?

MR. ANDERSON: The total medical bill, hospital and doctor, was \$120,000.

A PARTICIPANT: Does it make you angry that you were in the situation you were put into?

MR. ANDERSON: Yes, it did.

GOVERNOR MILLER: Thank you all very much.

(Whereupon, the press conference was concluded.)

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