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Subject: REVISED FINAL nurses/health reform remarks

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One tweak. Please use this version as final. Thanks.

REVISED FINAL 07/15/09

Keenan

6-4698 desk

P6/b(6)

**Remarks of President Barack Obama
On Health Reform and America's Nurses
The White House
July 15, 2009**

I'm pleased to be joined today by representatives from the American Nurses Association on behalf of the 2.9 million registered nurses in America – men and women who know as well as

anyone the urgent need for health reform.

I should disclose right off the bat that I have a long-standing bias towards nurses. When Sasha, our younger daughter, contracted a dangerous case of meningitis when she was just three months old, we were terrified. But it was the nurses who were there with us, explaining what was going on, telling us it would all be okay.

So I know how important nurses are, and the nation does too. Nurses aren't in health care to get rich; they're in it to care for us from the time they bring new life into this world to the moment they ease the pain of those who pass from it. If it weren't for nurses, many Americans in underserved and rural areas would have no access to health care at all.

That's why it's safe to say few understand why we have to pass reform as intimately as our nation's nurses. They see firsthand the heartbreaking cost of our health care crisis. They hear the same stories I've heard across this country – of treatment deferred or coverage denied by insurance companies; of insurance premiums and prescriptions that are so expensive they consume a family's entire budget; of Americans forced to use the emergency room for something as simple as a sore throat just because they can't afford to see a doctor.

This is a problem we can no longer wait to fix. Deferring reform is nothing more than defending the status quo – and those who would oppose our efforts should take a hard look at just what it is they're defending. Over the last decade, health insurance premiums have risen three times faster than wages. Deductibles and out-of-pocket costs are skyrocketing. And every single day we wait to act, thousands of Americans lose their insurance, some turning to nurses in the emergency room as their only recourse.

So make no mistake: The status quo on health care is not an option for the United States of America. It is threatening the financial stability of our families, our businesses, and government itself. It is unsustainable.

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REVISED FINAL 07/15/09
Keenan
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**Remarks of President Barack Obama
On Health Reform and America's Nurses
The White House
July 15, 2009**

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