

I will not read my full opening statement. It will be put into the record at the appropriate place. There is growing concern, as reflected in medical literature, as well as in testimony before the Senate Small Business Committee's Monopoly Subcommittee, that the increasingly close financial relationship between the drug industry and the medical profession may be contrary to the best interests of the profession and public.

We have been exploring this question in some detail over a period of time.

(The complete prepared statement and supplemental information submitted by Senator Nelson follows:)

#### OPENING STATEMENT BY SENATOR GAYLORD NELSON

There is growing concern, as reflected in medical literature, as well as in testimony before the Senate Small Business Committee's Monopoly Subcommittee, that the increasingly close financial relationship between the drug industry and the medical profession may be contrary to the best interests of the profession and the public.

At the very time the Committee was exploring this subject at length early this year, medical students at several of the nation's leading universities voluntarily returned to the drug companies gifts such as bags and diagnostic instruments as a symbolic protest against what they term "an unhealthy relationship" between the drug industry and the medical profession.

Thirty-six students at Case Western Reserve school of Medicine wrote a public letter to the New England Journal of Medicine in which they stated that the bags and tools presented to them as gifts by a drug firm "are not gifts but rather are inappropriate advertisements . . . and that all but the most naive realize that (the company's) motivation is to influence our future choice of drugs."

Shortly thereafter more than one-third of the second-year class at Harvard Medical School said in a letter to a drug company which had provided them with these so-called gifts, "medical students who accept gifts acquire a sense of familiarity and gratitude toward the donors that can undermine objectivity." And they further stated that the medical profession is largely responsible for the "unhealthy relationship" because it "has failed to maintain proper distance from the industry."

Following the action taken by the Harvard students, one-third of the first-year medical students at Columbia University's College of Physicians expressed their "dissatisfaction with the exploitative practices of the American drug industry" and said that as a result they returned gift stethoscopes to the Eli Lilly Company. In the letter which the students sent to Lilly they said: "Promotional programs of this sort are obviously intended to initiate the establishment of close ties between physicians and pharmaceutical houses, for mutual benefit. Such a relationship relegates the needs of the patient to a role of secondary importance."

On February 27, medical students at the University of Virginia's School of Medicine embarked on a campaign to direct attention among medical students across the country to controversial links between future doctors and the drug industry. Declaring that the actions taken by the medical students at Case Western Reserve and Harvard were not enough, the Virginia medical students said their campaign plan is to stir the consciences of other medical students across the country through debates similar to the one they held.

Dr. William O'Brien of Virginia's School of Medicine stated: "Medicine is the highest paying profession and it should never get in a conflict of interest. It is definitely wrong." The major issue of the debate at Virginia was on conflict of interest. Coincidentally, a notice on the bulletin board a few steps down the hall from the debate instructed students on how to obtain free drugs for themselves and family members living with them from drug company representatives. They were also instructed to ask a physician writing a prescription to note the name of the preferred drug company on the prescription.

On March 28, Earl Gottschalk, Jr. wrote an article in the Wall Street Journal covering the action of these medical students in some detail. As Mr. Gottschalk pointed out, "the gift issue has caused quite a stir in the medical world \* \* \* The gifts are more than tokens." He went on to note that one medical school professor estimates that the average student receives \$500 worth of gifts and