My dear Mrs. Leaker:

Confirming our conversation of Wednesday I will try and tell you a little of what I am planning to do during the next few months to familiarize Democratic leaders with The President's Health Program so that they will want to take the true story to the voters in the coming campaign. The untruths that have been circulated about this great program by the American Medical Association have achieved at least one benefit: everyone is aware that there is an Administration Health Program and that the AMA is fighting it tooth and nail.

In my extensive travels of the last two years I have found that few people know any details of the Administration Health Program; all they know is what the AMA publicists have dinned into the ears of the general public and of course, that is all covered by the one term, socialized medicine. As I see it, it is up to us Democrats to see that our own leaders are first, educated to the fact that it is NOT socialized medicine that The President is proposing and second, that the Program that is backed by the Administration is one that the voters will demand when they understand it.

Democratic leaders must know the truth about this Program and the only way in which they can know this truth is for us of the National Committee to take it to them. Then they, in turn, can explain health insurance and the other phases of the Program to the voters of their communities. It is my belief that programs of this sort are "sold" not just by speakers on platforms but in conversations between neighbors and acquaintances and so it is absolutely necessary that every Democratic worker (there are over 200,000 of them in the country) be familiar with the proposed Health Program and able to point out the untruths that have been circulated by the AMA.

There has been one school of thought that has advised that this year we make no issue of the Health Plan; that we just let the opposition talk about it and that we sit back in silent scorn and refuse to be drawn into discussion about it. That is a completely erroneous way of thinking in
my estimation and I can think of no better way in which to court defeat than to play the ostrich game concerning the Health Program. We must not just defend the Program, we must take the offensive and "sell" our Program to the voters. The AMA unconsciously has provided us with a good springboard and we must take advantage of this and use it as a springboard rather than something under which to hide.

We cannot rely on the press and radio to give our side of the story unless we make a conscious effort to see that what we have to say is news and so cannot be ignored; we need to train speakers; we must circulate literature in which the Health Program is explained in elementary terms that can be understood by what we call the precinct mind; and we need to assemble exhibits that will graphically illustrate the need for the Administration Health Plan. These exhibits will be used at conferences of Democratic leaders and workers and then will be on display in trailers that will tour various districts after the primaries.

Every dollar spent during the next three months will be worth much more than during the last three months before the election so a contribution at this time will be of more value than one made later. I feel sure that there will be enough money forthcoming for necessary campaign expenses but ___ we need to start our work immediately. I cannot give you a detailed budget plan for I have not worked it out but we need on our staff a couple of experts who are completely familiar with the Administration Program to write speeches, to prepare literature for distribution and to assist with publicity. We need money for printing and for visual presentations, etc.

I want to have a representative at many national conventions this spring to try and get more favorable resolutions passed. These resolutions in themselves mean nothing but if an organization that came out against health insurance last year passes a favorable resolution this year, it is newsworthy and we should be in a position to make the most of it. We need someone to contact the key people in these organizations before the conventions; there is no question about our trying to fight the AMA with the same weapons it is using for we never will have the means to do that but we have a program that is appealing to the people so we do not need the same big guns that the opposition uses. It will be another case of David and Goliath but David must have a sling shot, at least.

As I told you the other day I am going to talk to The President about the possibility of holding an off-the-record conference of medical leaders who are sympathetic to the Program. We must fight the AMA but not individual
medical men who are not inimical to our Program, and it seems to me the height of folly not to develop a reservoir of professional understanding and sympathy. Only The President can do this, however. Physicians I know who realize the necessity for health insurance are a little hurt because they never have been consulted and I feel sure only salutary results would occur if The President would hold such an off-the-record conference. I have discussed this idea with several Governors, National Committeemen and women as well as with medical leaders and they all are enthusiastic about it and feel that such a conference would do much to help in their respective states. I am going to talk to The President about it as soon as he returns from Key West; I had an appointment to see him before he left but unfortunately I was taken to the hospital with the flu the day of the appointment.

This is an inadequate presentation of what we are going to try and do to help explain The Administration Health Program to the voters during the next six months but perhaps it will give you enough of an idea so that you will want to help us. I hope so. Political contributions, even when ear-marked for a specific educational project, cannot exceed $5,000, as you know, but it is not unlawful for two, three, four or five members of a family to contribute. I feel sure that any contributions intended to be used by the Women's Division for furthering The President's Health Program can be so ear-marked with the understanding and approval of The White House and the Committee Chairman.

In my estimation, this is the number one issue of the campaign and we must devote much time and energy and imagination, as well as money, to seeing that the opposition does not brand Truman Democrats as Socialists just by the simple method of labeling the President's Health Program socialized medicine.

I hope you have a wonderful trip and that I shall have the pleasure of seeing you upon your return, whether or not you decide to assist us now in the work in which we both are so vitally interested. Because I think a dollar now will do the work of several dollars later, I do hope you will decide to make a contribution now.

Very sincerely yours,

India Edwards

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