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. . . It's a privilege to speak to this group.

I'd like to tell a short story about power in Washington. It's quite an insightful story, one I heard a number of years ago, which is timely this year. It was told by Al Gore about Bill Bradley. It goes back to when Bradley was first elected and came to Washington. Bradley came with an awesome reputation: All American, NBA basketball star, Rhodes scholar. He came to a meal function and, as he sat waiting to make his speech, a waiter gave everyone one pat of butter. Bradley said, I'd like two. The waiter said, Everyone gets one. Bradley said, Maybe you don't know who I am. The waiter said, I know who you are, but maybe you don't know who I am. I am the guy in control of the butter.

I think that's apropos for those of us who are interested in changing policy in this town and who perhaps don't have some of the clout and access of groups who come in with money and PACs.

There are two kinds of lobbying: one way is with money, bringing in significant resources. Without money, you try to be helpful, accurate, and there. If the consumer/survivor movement were to organize and form an organization that could be represented in Washington, you presumably would be in that latter category.

I hope you intend to do that. It's far too long that we have not had a direct consumer voice on the inside of where the policy decisions are made. There's no substitute for being available on a consistent basis. The way my job gets done, and the jobs of people like me, is endlessly meeting first with the other organizations that are interested in these issues, then going to the Hill and trying to work with members who are sympathetic. Each organization has its own perspectives and its own angles, and you have to try to work out what you can with all of them. On the Hill, you must try to be available and known, so offices will contact you when there is legislation. An example is Joe Rogers working hard on the Protection and Advocacy Act renewals. That is the only way things get done here.

You have to be able to sit at the table, work through the details of the different bills, deal with people who have different ideas, and be ready to communicate with them. At times disagreements get heated. We fracture. We have some big coalitions that meet regularly. If something is big enough, we all work together. We tried to get the Clinton health care reform bill through, with a good mental health benefit. When we could no longer say we wanted every service covered without limit, we fractured. That happens on a lot of issues. It happens on seclusion and restraints, where the mental health community is divided between provider groups and groups concerned about eliminating or reducing the use of seclusion and restraint. Sometimes when you can't agree, groups lobby separately and confuse members of Congress by coming in with different points of view.

We do a good deal of bickering and a lot of times we air that dirty laundry in public. But it's an important process. My job is to facilitate so we can move policy forward.

It's difficult to get mental health on the agenda in Washington. Things tend to be done incrementally, as a lot of things are done in this town, not so different than on the state level. Incremental steps are important. It's important to have diverse views at the table. A lot of times the consumer point of view will be more firm than a lot of the established groups. It's helpful for that voice to be in the room, to have a consumer/survivor organization speaking for itself. Identify the core issues of the consumer movement, decide what positions you want, where you are or aren't willing to compromise, and put out the radical point of view where it needs to be put out. Participating in policy formation will help support consumers to live and work decently in the community. Help us move away from what I see as a punitive, negative attitude on the Hill, which is reflected in the press and in state legislatures.

Everyone is looking for simple solutions to complex problems. There is pressure in this town to deal with problems in simple, easy ways. It's why we've lost people on the SSI roles and why there is IOC.

Bazelon wants to welcome everyone. I think it's fine if people have diverse views. You can have one group, two groups. We have any number of provider groups or other groups in our coalition. The main thing is for a consumer voice to be here. I'd like to quote Dr. Spock, and emphasize that you should "trust yourselves, you know more than you think." If you decide to do this — that is, to find someone to play that role in this town — you *will* make a difference. When you try to manipulate things from a long distance, it's hard to do.

Thank you.