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REBECCA M. PATTON, MSN, RN, CNOR
PRESIDENT

LINDA J. STIERLE, MSN, RN, CNAAB, BC
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear ANA Member,

Thank you for contacting us to share your concerns regarding the American Nurses Association's (ANA) recent endorsement of Senator Hillary Clinton for President. As you may know, ANA has endorsed a candidate in each presidential election since 1984. Today, we continue to follow the 1985 House of Delegates resolution directing ANA to engage presidential contenders of all parties in endorsement considerations. As the Resolution requires, ANA's Presidential endorsements are made according to a very deliberate, non-partisan process, and only after careful consideration of a variety of factors including: candidate positions and past records on nursing and health care issues; candidate viability in the election; the relationship the candidate has with ANA members and staff; and the feedback of individual ANA/CMA members.

The endorsement process for the upcoming presidential election began in the summer of 2007 when ANA sent candidate questionnaires to viable presidential candidates of all parties and invited each of them to participate in interviews with representatives of the ANA Political Action Committee (PAC) Board and ANA Government Affairs Staff. From that time forward, ANA staff maintained regular, ongoing contact with the campaigns of all viable presidential candidates of both parties.

The candidates' questionnaire responses, as well as additional background information on their positions on issues relating to nursing and health care were made available on the ANA Government Affairs website, www.anapoliticalpower.org and, from January 3-17, 2008, ANA members weighed in by voting online for a first and second choice presidential candidate in ANA's Virtual Voting Booth. This call for member input on the endorsement met with an unprecedented level of response, and the voting results were conclusive. Senator Clinton garnered the strongest support, receiving 42% of the vote. The votes for the other candidates broke down as follows: Senator Barack Obama, 21%; Sen. John Edwards, 9%; Gov. Mike Huckabee 8%; Sen. John McCain, 8%; Gov. Mitt Romney, 5%; Mayor Rudolph Guliani, 3%; Sen. Fred Thompson, 3%; Rep Dennis Kucinich, 1%; Rep. Ron Paul, 1%; Sen. Joe Biden, .5%; Gov. Bill Richardson, .12%; Jon Cox, .06%; Sen. Christopher Dodd 0%; Sen. Mike Gravel, 0%; Rep. Duncan Hunter, 0%.

Based on the body of information gathered throughout the endorsement process, the ANA-PAC Board voted to recommend that the ANA Board endorse Senator Clinton. On January 23, 2008, the ANA Board of Directors voted to approve that recommendation.

In making this endorsement, the ANA Board recognized Senator Clinton's longstanding commitment to nursing and health care. During her time in the Senate, Clinton has been an advocate for nursing issues. Clinton was in support of the Title VIII Nurse Reinvestment Act programs which provide much needed funding for nurse education. She recognizes the need for more nurse practitioners and supports increased authority for and utilization of nurse practitioners as a means of improving access to health care. She has a long history of advocacy for health care reform, and her current plan emphasizes the need to reduce costs, improve quality and ensure affordable health care for all Americans. She was a co-sponsor of the Mental Health Parity Act of 2007 which would improve mental health services.

From its inception in 1896 to the present day, ANA has recognized that individuals can shape health care policy consistent with the goals of registered nurses and in the best interest of their patients.

The participation of registered nurses in grassroots activities, including political advocacy, is one of the most important components of our government affairs program and has been responsible for many of our successes. ANA has a long, rich history of influencing public policy to benefit both registered nurses and their patients.

ANA's legislative agenda prioritizes ways to address the nursing shortage, appropriate staffing, workplace rights, workplace health and safety, and patient safety/advocacy. In keeping with a strong tradition of hard work, the ANA will continue to advocate for the profession of nursing. However, we cannot achieve these goals unless ANA as a national organization stays politically involved. Political advocacy, whether in Washington, D.C., or at the state level, is not about political parties or personal agendas, it is about identifying and supporting the policymakers of any party who share ANA's commitment to the nursing profession and to improving healthcare in our country. Through political advocacy, ANA builds and maintains relationships with candidates. These relationships are vital to our ability to engender understanding and gather support for the issues of concern to nurses today.

As I hope the process outlined above demonstrates, no political support is given by the ANA without careful consideration and analysis of the candidate's previous record and views on nursing. Only candidates dedicated to the causes of the ANA are selected for support. Throughout our history, ANA has worked to meet the ever-changing needs of nurses, patients, the health care community, and society. Through political involvement and advocacy, including our support of Senator Clinton in her bid for the presidency, ANA will continue its fight for the needs of today's nursing profession as well as the health system needs of our country.

Thank you again for contacting us, and for your continued membership in and support of the ANA. It is obvious that you value nursing greatly, as do we. The ANA will continue to work to set and maintain professional standards of practice and work toward a goal we all share—strengthening the future of nursing and ensuring quality health care for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rebecca M. Patton".

Rebecca Patton, MSN, RN, CNOR
President