

Dan Rather Reports

Episode Number: 610

Episode Title: ...Do Unto Others

Description: A little-known exemption in the health care bill allows Christians to opt out of the mandatory coverage. Also, Presidential science advisor Eric Lander. And a mission to clean up the garbage far out in the Pacific.

TEASE:

DAN RATHER (VOICE OVER)

TONIGHT... FAITH... AND HEALTH INSURANCE. CONSERVATIVE AMERICAN CHRISTIANS HAVE FOUND THERE'S A WAY OUT OF PRESIDENT OBAMA'S HEALTH CARE LAW...

MIKE HOLTZINGER

I'm a Bible-believing Christian. I wanna associate with Bible-believing Christians because I know that their lifestyle is such that they're making better lifestyle choices.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

AND A SMALL-TOWN LAWSUIT MAY EXPOSE SOME OF BIG BUSINESSES DIRTY SECRETS WHEN IT COMES TO HIRING OR NOT HIRING AMERICAN WORKERS.

DONNA CONROY, TECH WORKER ACTIVIST IN CHICAGO

What's significant is the lengths that these companies will go to, including breaking the law to avoid hiring Americans.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

ALSO, TEN YEARS SINCE A MAJOR SCIENTIFIC MILESTONE, WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED AND HOW MUCH DO WE STILL NOT KNOW?

ERIC LANDER, THE BROAD INSTITUTE

This generation has gotten to read the-- the notebooks that evolution has been keeping in the genomes for the last 3 1/2 billion years.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

WE'LL BRING YOU THE NEWS, TONIGHT ON DAN RATHER REPORTS.

HEALTH MINISTRIES:

RATHER (ON CAMERA)

GOOD EVENING. WHEN CONGRESS PASSED THE NOW CONTROVERSIAL HEALTH CARE BILL LAST SPRING, CONSERVATIVES ACROSS THE COUNTRY VOWED TO FIGHT IT BECAUSE MANY FELT IT WAS UN-AMERICAN FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO FORCE CITIZENS TO BUY HEALTH INSURANCE. THEY TOOK THEIR BATTLE TO THE BALLOT BOX, TO THE HALLS OF CONGRESS, AND TO THE COURTS. .

BUT IT TURNS OUT THAT THERE'S A SMALL PROVISION IN THE BILL ITSELF THAT PROVIDES AN OUT TO WHAT IS KNOWN AS THE QUOTE, "INDIVIDUAL MANDATE."

BURIED IN SECTION 5000 OF THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT IS A PARAGRAPH SAYING THAT MEMBERS OF WHAT ARE KNOWN AS "HEALTH-CARE-SHARING MINISTRIES" ARE EXEMPT FROM BUYING HEALTH INSURANCE. HEALTH CARE SHARING MINISTRIES HAVE BEEN AROUND FOR YEARS AS A CHRISTIAN ALTERNATIVE TO TRADITIONAL HEALTH-INSURANCE. BUT THESE NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS HAVE SUDDENLY BECOME BIG NEWS AMONG CONSERVATIVES WHO WANT OUT OF PRESIDENT OBAMA'S HEALTH CARE LAW. AND THEY'RE GAINING MORE FOLLOWERS EVERY DAY.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

A GREY OFFICE PARK IN PEORIA ILLINOIS... TRUCKS RUMBLE BY TO NEARBY WAREHOUSES...A SCENE THAT HARDLY SEEMS LIKE THE EPICENTER FOR A MOVEMENT THAT CRITICS SAY COULD HELP UNDERMINE PRESIDENT OBAMA'S SIGNATURE LEGISLATIVE ACHIEVEMENT.

THIS IS THE HEADQUARTERS FOR SAMARITAN MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL. IT IS THE BIGGEST OF THE SO-CALLED HEALTH-CARE SHARING MINISTRIES EXEMPT FROM THE NEW HEALTH-CARE LAW. THE STAFF IS SMALL, FEWER THAN 70. AND ONE OF THEIR LEADERS IS JAMES LANSBERRY, A SOMETIMES PREACHER AND FATHER OF SEVEN WHO SAYS HE WAS DRAWN TO A MORE CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO CARING FOR HEALTH THAN TYPICAL INSURANCE...

JAMES LANSBERRY

Insurance companies try to look out into the future and-- and plan for what might happen. Our members are taking what's already happened and taking the time to bear one another burdens.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE MINISTRIES HAVE TAKEN THEIR GUIDANCE FROM A VERSE IN THE BIBLE THAT SAYS, "CARRY EACH OTHER'S BURDENS" -- AND TURNED IT INTO A NON-PROFIT MODEL FOR HEALTH CARE. HERE'S HOW IT WORKS.

THERE ARE NO PREMIUMS, NO CO-PAYS...BUT EACH MEMBER OF THE FAITHFUL IS TOLD AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MONTH WHERE TO SEND THEIR \$135 MONTHLY "FEE"...AND IT'S ALWAYS TO ANOTHER MEMBER WHO HAS A MEDICAL BILL.

LANSBERRY

You'll have members sending their checks directly to you that month. And you'll get notes and cards along with them. You know, when my wife had her appendix out, for example, a few years ago; it was a \$23,000 bill. We got notes and cards from 100 different people. Twenty-one different states.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

CHECKS MAY COME WITH PERSONAL WARM WISHES, BUT SAMARITAN DIVVIES UP THE BILLS WITH AUTOMATED PRECISION.

LANSBERRY

People often ask, "Well, how do you decide who's gonna do it? You just list everything in a newsletter and everybody sends where they want?" Well, that-- that'd be great if you could do it that way, but what would happen is the person with cancer would get about five times what they need and the person who just had their back go out and a few hundred dollars in bills, they probably wouldn't get anything 'cause everyone would be so, "Aw, I need to send to the cancer person." We have a computer program that we put together that actually sits down and divides things out.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

SAMARITAN'S MEMBERSHIP GREW STEADILY SINCE ITS FOUNDING IN 1994 -- BUT SPIKED RIGHT AROUND WHEN PEOPLE STARTED FINDING OUT ABOUT THE EXEMPTION IN THE HEALTH-CARE BILL. SAMARITAN'S RATE OF GROWTH DOUBLED BETWEEN 2009 AND 2011.

STILL, IN ORDER TO JOIN, YOU HAVE TO SIGN A DECLARATION OF FAITH AND PROVE YOU GO TO CHURCH, VIA A SIGNED LETTER FROM A PASTOR. YOU ALSO HAVE TO PROMISE NOT TO SMOKE, TAKE DRUGS OR ENGAGE IN EXTRAMARITAL SEX. BEYOND THOSE REQUIREMENTS, ALL ARE WELCOME.

LANSBERRY

We have members that are Pentecostal, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian. Everywhere across. You know, we have people that would never, ever be able to sit in the same pew on a

Sunday morning because of particular convictions that they have who are sharing one another's medical bills.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THAT'S THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND THE HEALTH CARE MINISTRIES, BUT IS THE RECENT SPIKE IN MEMBERSHIP BEING DRIVEN BY RELIGIOUS DEVOTION, OR POLITICAL MOTIVES?

ONE WAY TO GAUGE IS TO LOOK AT THE PAMPHLETS THE SHARING MINISTRIES SEND TO PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS THAT SAY THINGS LIKE QUOTE, "THERE'S STILL HEALTH CARE FOR PEOPLE OF FAITH AFTER HEALTH CARE 'REFORM.'"

AND, "DON'T BE DECEIVED BY THE SOOTHING PROMISES MADE BY THE PROPONENTS OF GOVERNMENT REGULATION."

ANOTHER WAY TO GAUGE IS BY TAKING A LOOK AT CONSERVATIVE NEWS SITES AND BLOGS WHERE THERE'S AS MUCH TALK ABOUT PRESIDENT OBAMA AS THERE IS JESUS. HERE'S WHAT THEY'RE SAYING ON THE CONSERVATIVE WEBSITE, FREEREPUBLIC.COM.

"THIS COULD BE A GOOD WAY TO ENGAGE IN CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND OPT OUT OF KENYANCARE WHILE WE WORK ON THE REPEAL."

LANSBERRY HIMSELF WENT ONTO A BLOG-POST TITLED "HEALTH-CARE INSANITY" TO SUGGEST THAT MINISTRIES ARE QUOTE, "A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO SAY 'YOU CAN'T MAKE ME BUY INSURANCE.'"

HE WAS ALSO A GUEST ON A CONSERVATIVE RADIO SHOW WHERE HE RECOMMENDED SHARING MINISTRIES AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO GOVERNMENT HEALTH-CARE.

CALLER

How can we opt out without having jack-booted thugs kicking down our door?

LANSBERRY

Well, I think opting out of the system is going to be possible for us. There's an exemption written into the bill for members of health-care sharing ministries.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE FAITHFUL WERE GETTING THE MESSAGE...ON A DIFFERENT BLOG, UNDER THE HEADLINE QUOTE "OBAMA-CARE TRAVESTY," THE AUTHOR SAYS THE LAW TAKES AWAY AMERICAN'S, "FREEDOM TO PRACTICE THEIR FAITH," AND TALKS

ABOUT JOINING A HEALTH-CARE SHARING MINISTRY. THAT POST WAS WRITTEN BY MIKE HOLTZINGER OF SUBURBAN EVERETT, WASHINGTON.

MIKE HOLTZINGER

Oh, good question. Do I consider myself a Tea Partier? I have never attended a Tea Party function. Do I agree with them? Absolutely I do.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

HE AND HIS WIFE DAWN JOINED SAMARITAN LAST YEAR AFTER HIS INSURANCE PREMIUMS KEPT RISING.

HOLTZINGER

Then it went up to \$982 dollars. Every time that check would come across my desk, and I'd have to mail that out, I was angry. I didn't like it. I thought, I'm crippling -- I personally am crippling the ministry of my church.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

HOLTZINGER IS A PASTOR OF A SMALL CONGREGATION. SO THE HEALTH CARE MINISTRIES DID APPEAL TO HIS FAITH. THEY ALSO APPEALED TO HIS POLITICAL BELIEFS.

HE BLAMES HEALTH-CARE REFORM FOR PART OF HIS INSURANCE RATE-HIKE AND HE'S WORRIED ABOUT WHAT HE PERCEIVES AS A CREEPING GOVERNMENT TAKEOVER OF HEALTH-CARE. SO HE FOLLOWED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL MANDATE CLOSELY.

HOLTZINGER

I was fully aware that that was there. Of course, I objected to the whole concept. I think any time a government agency asks you to buy something, forces you to buy something, there's a loss of liberty.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

PASTOR HOLZINGER SAID IT FELT "LIBERATING" TO BE ABLE TO OPT OUT OF THE INDIVIDUAL MANDATE BY JOINING A HEALTH-CARE SHARING MINISTRY. BUT HE ALSO LIKES THE CHANCE TO LIVE OUT HIS CHRISTIAN VALUES... WHILE SAVING 700 BUCKS A MONTH FOR HIM AND HIS WIFE... MONEY HE WORRIED WAS GOING TO BANKRUPT HIS SMALL CHURCH. AND AS FOR THE FEE HE DOES HAVE TO PAY, HE SAYS HE DOES SO WITH JOY.

HOLTZINGER

So I've gone from being angry to being excited about writing a check for \$270. And on my income level, \$270 is a lot of money. So-- and I love it. I get to write a check to an individual, and I know 100 percent of that money is going to help that indivi-- individual.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

CHRISTIANS WHO SIGN UP FOR SHARING MINISTRIES SEEM TO ACTUALLY BE HAPPY WITH THEIR HEALTH CARE. YOU DON'T HEAR THAT ABOUT MANY TRADITIONAL INSURANCE COMPANIES.

BUT PEOPLE WHO REGULATE INSURANCE COMPANIES ARE VERY CONCERNED. THEY SAY THE MINISTRIES ARE NOT INSURANCE, AND IF CONSUMERS DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'RE BUYING INTO, THAT COULD BE DANGEROUS FOR THEM AND THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM AS A WHOLE... THE MINISTRIES' MESSAGE IS NOT ALWAYS CRYSTAL CLEAR. TAKE THIS PROMOTIONAL VIDEO. . .

SAMARITAN PROMOTIONAL VIDEO

You know the feeling's priceless when I get a call that my husband's on the way to the hospital with a heart attack. I'm walking into the emergency room. I knew that the financial need was gonna be cared for....

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

CRITICS SAY THIS SOUNDS TO BE AN INSURANCE-LIKE LEGAL GUARANTEE OF PAYMENT, AND THAT IS MISLEADING.

MICHAEL MCRAITH, INSURANCE DIRECTOR

The concern with a sharing program as a panacea-- is that it's a complete fiction.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

MICHAEL MCRAITH IS THE ILLINOIS STATE INSURANCE DIRECTOR AND HE WAS JUST THIS WEEK ELEVATED BY PRESIDENT OBAMA TO BE THE UNITED STATES' TOP INSURANCE OFFICIAL. HE'S THE NATION'S LEADING VOICE OF CONCERN OVER HEALTH-CARE SHARING MINISTRIES.

MCRAITH

These are not insurance programs. First of all, they are operated on a cash-flow basis. There's no certainty that if one participant makes a payment this month, that six months from now that enterprise, that ministry is gonna be around. They might not have sufficient capital in six months to pay any claims. Somebody sees a physician, claim will be paid. Car accident? No certainty. Cancer? No certainty.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

MCRAITH DOESN'T JUST WORRY ABOUT INDIVIDUALS LEFT OUT IN THE COLD. HE SAYS HE FEARS THAT IF MEMBERSHIP TRENDS CONTINUE, SHARING MINISTRIES COULD THREATEN HEALTH CARE REFORM ITSELF. FIRST, THEY COULD PULL HEALTHY PEOPLE OUT OF THE SYSTEM.

MCRAITH

Someone who knows they need health care, knows they'll have prescription drug needs, they're gonna want the certainty of an insurance program. For that reason, we know that people likely to participate in a sharing program are less likely to have health care needs, less likely to be sick.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

HE SAYS THAT ALONE WOULD INCREASE MEDICAL COSTS FOR THE REST OF THE POPULATION -- THE POINT OF THE MANDATE AFTER ALL IS TO SPREAD RISK AMONG AS WIDE A GROUP AS POSSIBLE. BUT ON TOP OF THAT, UNDER LAST YEAR'S REFORM LAW, INSURANCE COMPANIES CANNOT TURN PEOPLE DOWN FOR PREEXISTING CONDITIONS -- MCRAITH FORESEES THAT PEOPLE COULD JOIN THE MINISTRIES TO SAVE ON MONTHLY PREMIUMS, AND THEN WHEN THEY GET SICK, JUMP BACK TO INSURANCE FOR THE CERTAINTY, DRIVING UP COSTS FURTHER.

MCRAITH

People will participate as long as it's economically meaningful. If insurance companies just cover sick people, the whole system blows up, we're not gonna have affordable coverage for people in the country.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

CRITICS SAY ANOTHER THREAT POSED BY SHARING MINISTRIES CAN BE FOUND IN THE FINE PRINT: THOSE COSTS WHICH ARE NEVER SHARED.

ROUTINE MEDICAL EXAMS, PHYSICALS, SHOTS - ANYTHING UP TO \$300 - WILL NOT BE REIMBURSED. PRESCRIPTION DRUGS FOR CHRONIC CONDITIONS WILL NOT BE REIMBURSED. SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES, NEVER -- UNLESS THEY'RE TRANSMITTED QUOTE, "INNOCENTLY." MENTAL HEALTH, PREEXISTING DIABETES AND HEART CONDITIONS... NOT REIMBURSED. AND MOST OTHER PREEXISTING CONDITIONS HAVE A WAITING PERIOD BEFORE THEY COME UP FOR CONSIDERATION. YOU HAVE TO WAIT SEVEN YEARS FOR A PREEXISTING CANCER TO BE TREATED, FOR EXAMPLE.

AND IF MEMBERS NEED CARE THAT'S NOT COVERED SAYS ILLINOIS INSURANCE DIRECTOR MCRAITH . . .

MCRAITH

Someone pays for that. Uncompensated care is paid for by taxpayers who support the public health system, and by those of us who have health insurance, because our premiums are increased to cover the cost of those people who do not have health insurance.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

IN FACT, DIRECTOR MCRAITH HIMSELF, AS WELL AS SEVERAL OTHER STATE INSURANCE COMMISSIONERS, WENT AFTER THE SECOND-BIGGEST SHARING MINISTRY, MEDISHARE, FOR PUTTING ITSELF OUT THERE AS INSURANCE AND THEN ABANDONING ITS MEMBERS. IN THREE STATES, COURTS DECIDED MEDISHARE HAD SHIRKED ITS MEMBERS' DESPERATE MEDICAL NEEDS.

BUT JAMES LANSBERRY BACK AT SAMARITAN RESPONDS THAT EVEN IF OTHER MINISTRIES HAVE SOMETIMES BEEN POORLY RUN, AS A GENERAL MATTER HE SAYS, THERE'S SIMPLY NO EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT MCRAITH'S CONCERN THAT MINISTRY MEMBERS ARE FREELoadERS ON THE HEALTH-CARE SYSTEM.

LANSBERRY

We-- have no bills to our knowledge that have not been met. And I think our track record shows itself. Samaritan Ministries doesn't have a single complaint filed with the Better Business Bureaus, with an attorney general or with the State Insurance Commission in 17 years, 50 states.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

VALLEY VIEW BAPTIST PASTOR HOLTZINGER SAYS THAT SOME FEATURES OF SHARING MINISTRIES COULD ACTUALLY REDUCE COSTS FOR EVERYONE. MANY ECONOMISTS WOULD AGREE THAT PAYING THE FIRST \$300 AND HAVING TO SEE YOUR BILLS WOULD MAKE CONSUMERS MORE SENSITIVE TO COSTS AND LESS LIKELY TO GET UNNECESSARY TESTS.

HOLTZINGER

I see it on the bill. I know exactly what it's going to be. And then I can call 'em up and then talk about getting a discounted price from 'em. What it made me do is take a little bit more control over-- the whole billing process and my whole healthcare process.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

HE ALSO SAYS THAT WHEN CLEAN-LIVING CHRISTIANS BUY HEALTH INSURANCE, THEY ACTUALLY LOWER COSTS FOR OTHER AMERICANS.

HOLTZINGER

It's like if-- if you smoke and you-- you come down with lung cancer there are a fair amount of things where you can get ill simply because you make bad life choices. And-- and what that does is that raises the cost for everybody. Where in this kind of ministry, the costs are kept down simply because you're dealing with people with similar lifestyles. I wanna associate with Bible-believing Christians because I know that their lifestyle is such that they're making better lifestyle choices.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

SO IF CHRISTIANS DO RAISE THE COST OF INSURANCE FOR OTHERS BY TAKING THEIR QUOTE, "HEALTHY LIFESTYLES" WITH THEM TO SHARING MINISTRIES, THAT'S OKAY BY HOLTZINGER. HE SAYS IT MIGHT ENCOURAGE PEOPLE WHO FALL ILL BECAUSE OF "IMMORAL BEHAVIOR" TO RECONSIDER THEIR LIFE-CHOICES.

HOLTZINGER

I think that-- when you start looking at the risk pool, and you're talking about people who are high risk because of personal behavior choices in particular, they're gonna h-- find that their health care costs are higher and that they might wanna t-- think about a lifestyle change.

RATHER (ON CAMERA)

AND THEN THERE IS THIS FINAL THOUGHT. ALL SHARING MINISTRIES TOGETHER TOTAL ONLY ABOUT 100 THOUSAND MEMBERS. SO NEXT ON HEALTH CARE REFORM ISN'T UNDER THREAT ANYTIME SOON, BUT DO NEW MEMBERS KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THEY'RE SIGNING UP FOR? INSURANCE REGULATORS IN WASHINGTON STATE ARE WONDERING EXACTLY THAT. THEY TOLD US THAT IN THE COMING WEEKS THEY WILL FILE A CEASE AND DESIST ORDER AGAINST SAMARITAN IN COURT FOR SELLING INSURANCE WITHOUT A LICENSE. THAT WOULD BE THE FIRST EVER LEGAL CHALLENGE AGAINST SAMARITAN.

NOW, IN A MOMENT STRONG ALLEGATIONS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST COMPANIES WHO HAD SAID AREN'T HIRING AMERICAN WORKERS.

VISA LOOPHOLE ACT 2:

RATHER (ON CAMERA)

WELCOME BACK. WE'VE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED ON HOW COMPANIES ARE IMPORTING FOREIGN GUEST WORKERS AND SENDING JOBS OVERSEAS EVEN WITH HISTORIC NUMBERS OF AMERICANS LOOKING FOR WORK. IT'S PART OF AN IMMIGRATION SYSTEM AND TRADE POLICY THAT CRITICS SAY UNDERCUTS AMERICAN WORKERS AND BOLSTERS CORPORATE PROFITS. NOW WE TURN TO

NEW ALLEGATIONS OF MASSIVE VISA FRAUD AND GIANT LOOPHOLES THAT CRITICS SAY ARE ALLOWING HI-TECH MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES TO DISCRIMINATE AGAINST AMERICANS.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

IT'S A STORY THAT BEGINS IN A SMALL-TOWN COURTHOUSE IN ALABAMA. HAYNESVILLE IS TWENTY-MINUTES OUTSIDE MONTGOMERY, HOME TO JUST OVER A THOUSAND PEOPLE. IT WAS LONG KNOWN AS A STRONGHOLD OF JIM CROW. BUT IN THE SIXTIES THIS RURAL CORNER OF ALABAMA BECAME A FRONT LINE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS.

AND NOW THE COURTHOUSE HAS BECOME THE PROVING GROUND FOR A NEW KIND OF CIVIL RIGHTS BATTLE. IT CENTERS AROUND A LAWSUIT FILED LAST MONTH.

THE ATTORNEY IN THE CASE IS KENNY MENDELSON, A MONTGOMERY LAWYER WHO CAN OFTEN BE FOUND HERE AT CHRIS'S HOT DOG CAFE DURING LUNCH TIME, TALKING LEGAL STRATEGY WITH HIS LAW PARTNER.

KENNY MENDELSON

If I ever told my grandparents 30, 40 years ago that I'd be representing a white guy suing an Indian company for discrimination I think they would have thought I was out of my mind.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

MENDELSON HAS A CLIENT WHO'S SUING A COMPANY BASED HALF WAY AROUND THE GLOBE AND A WORLD AWAY FROM ALABAMA. INFOSYS TECHNOLOGIES...ONE OF THE LARGEST COMPANIES IN INDIA AND THE WORLD. THE HIGH-TECH GIANT IS THE CROWN JEWEL OF INDIA'S OUTSOURCING INDUSTRY. INFOSYS HAS CONTRACTS WITH FORTUNE 500 COMPANIES IN THE U.S. LIKE WAL-MART, HOME DEPOT, AND GOLDMAN SACHS. THE COMPANY DOES EVERYTHING FROM CUSTOMIZE SOFTWARE SYSTEMS TO ACCOUNTING... BUT NOT ALL THE WORK IS DONE IN INDIA. THE COMPANY ALSO BRINGS THOUSANDS OF INDIANS TO WORK IN THE UNITED STATES...FOR JOBS THAT USED TO BE DONE BY AMERICANS.

RATHER (ON CAMERA)

ATTORNEY KENNY MENDELSON SAYS HE'D NEVER HEARD OF INFOSYS UNTIL HE GOT A PHONE CALL LAST FALL FROM AN INFOSYS MANAGER, AN AMERICAN NAMED JAY PALMER WHO SAID HE'D DISCOVERED THAT THE COMPANY WAS FLOUTING IMMIGRATION LAWS BY BRINGING IN COMPUTER PROGRAMMERS FROM INDIA. PALMER SAID HE FILED AN INTERNAL WHISTLE BLOWER COMPLAINT, BUT THAT THE COMPANY FAILED TO FIX THE PROBLEM. INSTEAD, PALMER SAID INFOSYS CHASTISED HIM FOR REFUSING TO BE QUOTE "A TEAM

PLAYER.” LAST MONTH PALMER HIRED ATTORNEY MENDELSON AND SUED THE COMPANY FOR RETALIATION. PALMER DECLINED TO SPEAK TO US DIRECTLY -- OR EVEN PROVIDE A PHOTOGRAPH. HIS LAWYERS SAYS SINCE THE FILING, PALMER’S BEEN TARGETED WITH DEATH THREATS.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

WORD OF THE COURT CASE SPREAD FAST, MENDELSON SAYS. AND SOME OF THE THOUSANDS OF GUEST WORKERS HERE FROM INDIA WERE NOT PLEASED BY THE ALLEGATIONS.

MENDELSON

What I’ve learned through this and-- and we have overwhelming documentation to support it is that Infosys has a system of getting around our visa laws and sending employees over to America on a B-1 visa, which is basically a tourist visa

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

B-1 VISAS -- ALSO KNOWN AS BUSINESS VISAS, ARE SUPPOSED TO BE FOR FOREIGNERS COMING TO THE U.S. FOR MEETINGS, NEGOTIATIONS, RESEARCH OR TRAINING FOR WHICH THEY ARE NOT BEING PAID. AND AS THE U.S. CONSULATE IN INDIA WARNS, UNDER THE B-1 VISA: ““BUSINESS DOES NOT MEAN GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT.”

MENDELSON

So, there are a serious number of people over here basically doing work on illegal visas.

RATHER (ON CAMERA)

TO GET A B-1 BUSINESS VISA, VISITORS MUST FILE AN APPLICATION WITH THE U.S. CONSULATE AND PROVIDE SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION. THAT TYPICALLY INCLUDES A LETTER OF INVITATION DETAILING THE LENGTH AND PURPOSE OF THE TRIP -- WHICH CAN NOT INCLUDE FULL-TIME WORK - THAT’S THE LAW.

BUT ACCORDING TO PALMER’S LAWSUIT INFOSYS WAS SENDING EMPLOYEES TO THE U.S. IN DIRECT VIOLATION OF IMMIGRATION LAWS AND MENDELSON SAYS THEY HAVE THE DOCUMENTS TO PROVE IT.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAYS THE COMPANY’S INTERNAL WEBSITE HAS A PAGE FOR EMPLOYEES APPLYING FOR A U.S. BUSINESS VISA WITH A LINK TO DOWNLOAD A LIST OF DO’S AND DON’TS THAT HE SAYS, HELPED EMPLOYEES TO OBTAIN B-1 VISAS IMPROPERLY.

MENDELSON

They have a specific set of don'ts. "Do not mention activities like implementation, design, testing, consulting, et cetera, which sounds like work." In other words, they're telling them, "Don't say anything that makes it sound like you're doin' work." The reason is-- is that B-1 visa holders are not allowed to do work in the United States.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

MENDELSON SAYS THE COMPANY'S MARCHING ORDERS ARE LAID OUT IN BLACK AND WHITE.

MENDELSON

And then it says in bold capital letters, "Do not tell them you're working. Speak little English."

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

AND MENDELSON SAYS THEY WENT BEYOND THAT...HE SAYS INFOSYS ASKED HIS CLIENT TO SIGN LETTERS OF INVITATION FOR VISA APPLICATIONS THAT HE KNEW TO BE INACCURATE.

MENDELSON

Essentially they were asking Jay to lie. To-- tell our government that-- this particular individual was comin' over here for meetings, when in fact he was comin' over here to work.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

MENDELSON SAYS PALMER WAS ASKED TO SIGN LETTERS LIKE THIS ONE, INVITING AN INFOSYS EMPLOYEE FROM INDIA TO ATTEND "BUSINESS MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS" WHERE HE WOULD BE, AGAIN QUOTE, "MAKING A PRESENTATION ON QUALITY ASSURANCE" -- A TWO WEEK TRIP.

IN REALITY, HE SAYS, THAT EMPLOYEE WAS ACTUALLY COMING TO WRITE SOFTWARE ON MR. PALMER'S PROJECT IN CHICAGO, AND AS THIS DOCUMENT SHOWS, HE "PLANNED TO STAY FOR 6 WEEKS AS PER THE PROJECT PLAN."

KNOWINGLY PRESENTING A FALSE INVITATION LETTER TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT -- ACCORDING TO THE IMMIGRATION ATTORNEYS AND OFFICIALS WE TALKED TO -- IS A FELONY.

WHICH IS WHY, MENDELSON SAYS, HIS CLIENT REFUSED TO SIGN THEM.

RATHER (ON CAMERA)

WE WANTED TO VERIFY AND DISCUSS THE ALLEGATIONS AND DOCUMENTS WITH INFOSYS, BUT THE COMPANY DECLINED OUR REQUEST FOR AN INTERVIEW OR TO COMMENT ON THE MATERIAL WE OBTAINED.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THEY DID PROVIDE THIS STATEMENT. QUOTE, “WE ARE AWARE OF THE LAW SUIT FILED IN ALABAMA BY AN EMPLOYEE. WE BELIEVE IN CONDUCTING OUR BUSINESS WITH INTEGRITY. AS A RESULT, WE TAKE THESE ALLEGATIONS SERIOUSLY AND ARE INVESTIGATING THEM THOROUGHLY.”

SOME IMMIGRATION ATTORNEYS ARGUE THAT WHAT COMPRISES WORK IS A VERY GREY AREA IN B-1 VISA LAW. WHEN WE ASKED FEDERAL IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES FOR CLARIFICATION, WE DIDN’T GET MUCH. A STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL TOLD US IN AN EMAIL THAT THE B-1 VISAS DO PERMIT WHAT THEY CALLED “LIMITED PROFESSIONAL SERVICES.” AND WHILE THEY SAID THE DEPARTMENT CAN’T TRACK HOW VISITORS ARE USING THEIR B-1 VISAS ONCE ISSUED, WE WERE ASSURED, “THE VAST MAJORITY OF TRAVELERS...USE THEM LEGITIMATELY.”

BUT ACCORDING TO SEVERAL HIGH-TECH INDUSTRY VETERANS WE TALKED TO -- MISUSE OF B-1 VISAS HAS BEEN AN OPEN SECRET FOR YEARS, BUT NEVER BEFORE, THEY SAID, HAVE THE ALLEGATIONS BEEN LAID OUT IN OPEN COURT -- AT LEAST NOT LIKE THIS.

DONNA CONROY, TECH WORKER ACTIVIST IN CHICAGO

What's significant about Jay Palmer's case is that he documents the lengths that these companies will go to, including breaking the law to avoid hiring Americans.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

DONNA CONROY IS A TECH WORKER ACTIVIST IN CHICAGO WHO’S BEEN IN THE INDUSTRY OVER THIRTY YEARS.

CONROY

We have an unemployment rate that is through the roof. And yet, they chose to violate visa law, and-- implement the business visa in order to-- fill these job openings here in the United States.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

CONROY SAYS YOU DON’T HAVE TO TAKE HER WORD FOR IT. CHECK ANY INTERNET JOB BOARD IN INDIA -- AND YOU’LL SEE, SHE SAYS, THAT IT’S NOT JUST INFOSYS SENDING WORKERS TO THE U.S. ON B-1 VISAS.

CONROY

It pulled up 98 B-1 visa job openings. They're all requiring these technical professionals to also have a B-1 visa.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

AND SOME OF THE COMPANIES MIGHT SOUND FAMILIAR....

CONROY

IBM Daksh, a Business Process Services for the mentioned position, candidates should have a valid B-1 or B-2 visa with minimum 1 years of health care domain experience. Candidates would be part of a knowledge transfer team and would need to travel to U.S. immediately.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

IN LAYMAN'S TERMS, CONROY SAYS, "TRANSFER KNOWLEDGE" IS TRAINING THAT ALLOWS COMPANIES TO MOVE WORK DONE BY AMERICANS OVERSEAS.

CONROY

This is right here, a want ad that specifically states exactly how they need these visas and they need their workers to come to the United States and be trained in order for them to successfully ship that job abroad.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

AND THE B-1 VISA IS JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG. SHE BELIEVES EVERY YEAR, COMPANIES USE AND ABUSE A WHOLE ALPHABET SOUP OF VISAS TO IMPORT THOUSANDS OF FOREIGN WORKERS TO FILL AMERICAN JOBS ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

CONROY

We have job openings in Charlotte, North Carolina, in Atlanta, Georgia, in Des Moines, Iowa, in Troy, Michigan, that are calling for H1B only, that are calling for OPT only-- that are calling for B1 visa-holders only. And right in the title, the message is clear. No Americans need apply.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

MOST TROUBLING CONROY BELIEVES, IS THAT UNDER MOST OF THESE VISA PROGRAMS, IT IS PERFECTLY LAWFUL.

CONROY

So it's also legal for companies to displace Americans from their jobs, in favor of-- foreign citizens that these companies have hired through these corporate visa programs. This is what we want to fix.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

CONROY'S ROLLING OUT A COUNTER-OFFENSIVE INSPIRED BY THE PROTEST TACTICS OF THE 1960S.

CONROY

Instead of a national sit-in, it's gonna be a national apply-in. We're going to be reposting these jobs openings on our website. We're telling Americans, if you're qualified for these job openings, we encourage you to apply.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

HER GROUP HOPES THAT BRINGING ATTENTION TO THE WIDE NUMBER OF HI-TECH COMPANIES WHO THEY SAY ARE ABUSING VISAS OF ALL KINDS WILL FORCE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF AMERICAN WORKERS FACING DISCRIMINATION.

CONROY

Companies are saying that we're fat and lazy, and-- and you know, unqualified for these job openings. In fact, we even had-- an Indian outsourcing executive say that Americans were unemployable. That's all to cover up the secret that these companies are not seeking local talent, and will do anything to avoid hiring American talent.

RATHER (ON CAMERA)

WHEN IT COMES TO GUEST WORKERS IN THE HI-TECH INDUSTRY -- WHAT'S LEGAL AND ILLEGAL IS A MATTER OF HOTLY-CONTESTED DEBATE. WHAT WE KNOW IN THE MEANTIME, IS THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ISSUES TENS OF THOUSANDS OF NEW HI-TECH GUEST WORKERS VISAS EACH YEAR. AND THOSE ARE JUST LEGAL GUEST WORKERS. AND WHEN IT COMES TO THE MILLIONS OF VISITORS ON TOURISTS AND BUSINESS VISAS, WHAT THEY'RE DOING HERE IS ANYBODY'S GUESS.

WE'LL BE FOLLOWING THIS STORY IN THE WEEKS AHEAD AS WE HAVE IN PREVIOUS PROGRAMS. IF YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED DISCRIMINATION LIKE THAT WHICH HAS BEEN ALLEGED TONIGHT...SEND US AN EMAIL AT VIEWER AT HD-DOT-NET.

NOW JUST AHEAD...CELEBRATING A SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE IN SCIENCE, THAT'S WHEN WE RETURN.

ERIC LANDER ACT 3:

RATHER (ON CAMERA)

ITS BEEN TEN YEARS SINCE THE PROMINENT SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL NATURE PUBLISHED A REPORT THAT SET THE SCIENTIFIC WORLD ABUZZ. RESEARCHERS HAD FOUND A WAY TO MAP THE HUMAN GENOME, WHICH MEANT INSTEAD OF JUST STUDYING HOW A DISEASE SPREADS IT, WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO FIND OUT WHERE EXACTLY IN OUR GENES IT DEVELOPS. THE HOPE WAS THAT BY 2011, THERE WOULD BE CURES FOR SOME OF OUR DEADLIEST DISEASES. A DECADE LATER, SCIENTISTS NOW ADMIT THAT THEY MAY HAVE JUMPED THE GUN WITH THEIR PREDICTIONS AND THAT SOME OF THOSE INITIAL EXPECTATIONS ARE STILL YEARS AWAY FROM FRUITION.

PRESIDENT OBAMA, IN HIS STATE OF THE UNION SPEECH THIS YEAR, VOWED TO STAND BEHIND SCIENTIFIC AND MEDICAL RESEARCH. BUT WITH BILLIONS OF DOLLARS INVESTED IN HUMAN GENOME RESEARCH AND FEDERAL FUNDING FOR IT NOW ON THE BUDGET CHOPPING BLOCK - WHAT SHOULD BE MADE OF THIS STILL EVOLVING, IMPORTANT AND COSTLY NEW SCIENCE?

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

DR. ERIC LANDER IS ONE OF THE PIONEERS IN HUMAN GENOME RESEARCH. HE'S FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF THE BRODE INSTITUTE OF M.I.T. AND HARVARD; AND ONE OF THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ADVISERS TO PRESIDENT OBAMA. WE SAT DOWN WITH HIM TO DISCUSS THE HUMAN GENOME PROJECT.

RATHER

Doctor, thank you for doing.

DR. ERIC LANDER, THE BROAD INSTITUTE

Oh, my pleasure.

RATHER

Really appreciate it, but let's have it out right from the start.

LANDER

Yes.

RATHER

What I know about genomes can be written on the back of a postage stamp. So let's go to some basics. What is the genome project? What are genomes?

LANDER

The genome is all the genetic information in the human being. It turns out that everything in your body is specified by a genetic code of three billion letters written in the language of DNA. It's a four letter language. What does it encode? It's got the code for the hemoglobin in your blood. For the collagen in your skin, the keratin in your hair. It's got the 21 thousand proteins that make up your body and all the instructions to when to turn them on and off. Around 1985, people started talking about this insane notion of actually reading out the whole humane genome. Around 1998 it became conceivable to think about getting the sequencing done, and within a period of about three years it accelerated like a rocket. By 2003, we had more 99 percent of the sequence, and we had an accurate-- less than one mistake in 100,000 letters. And suddenly we went from this vague notion that there was biological information to saying you could have it, you know, on your computer right there.

RATHER

Fascinating.

LANDER

It was an amazing time.

RATHER

But why should I or anybody who's outside high science care?

LANDER

Yeah, why should you care? I mean, what difference does it make to know this genetic code? Well, it turns out a lot of difference. The vast majority of diseases have at their root cause, at least in part, genetic variation. People who have a high risk of breast cancer, for example. Many of them have a specific mutation on a specific gene on chromosome 17.

RATHER

One that you can now find.

LANDER

You can find, you can sequence it. And if a woman knows that she is a carrier for mutation in that gene-- she knows that she's at risk for breast cancer a couple decades earlier than others in the population. She should go for screening more often, for example.

There are families who have similar kinds of risks for colon cancer. There are lots of what we call rare Mendelian diseases. Thing-- well, some not so rare. Cystic fibrosis. The ability to find

the gene for cystic fibrosis. And not just diagnose who has it, but begin to ask what's the protein? What's broken? How might you fix it?

And so there are companies today who are in clinical trials with drugs to try to repair some of the defects in cystic fibrosis. But that's-- that's just the start. Let's take cancer. People talk about cures for cancer. Well, it's a little nutty to talk about a cure for cancer unless you know what-- what's wrong, what the enemy is. All cancers are caused by genetic changes. But until recently, really until the last couple of years, we haven't been able to systematically read out those genetic changes.

You know, this is Dan, you know, this is an amazing period in the history of science because we're the first generation that has gotten to read-- this-- this world, this generation has gotten to read the-- the notebooks that evolution has been keeping in the genomes for the last 3 1/2 billion years. It is mind-boggling the library that's been opened up to us.

RATHER

What is the single most important thing for regular people, the population as a whole, to know about genome research?

LANDER

Probably that we're reading out blueprints for what's broken in many different settings. If you imagine trying to get your car fixed and you couldn't pop the hood and look under the hood and see what was broken, only very rarely would you be able to get it fixed. We now can pop the hood. We now can read blueprints. Well, we can at least see the blueprints. Over the next couple of decades we're gonna figure out how to use those blueprints. So people, on the one hand, should be optimistic, they should be committed, they should say it's a good public investment, and they should also resist the temptation to say that in the next year you're gonna have cures for this or that. There'll be happy returns here and there from it at an increasing pace, but we need the-- we need the public to be partners with scientists and having a realistic picture of what it takes to really change the world.

RATHER

Now the United States of America led in genome research?

LANDER

Very much. The United States of America...

RATHER

Do we still lead?

LANDER

I think we do. Although I can't say that's not without some worries on my part, about whether it will stay that way.

RATHER

Well, what are those worries?

LANDER

It takes significant investment. It worries me right now that-- that we're doubting-- at least in some quarters whether we should invest like that as a country.

RATHER

Or whether we can afford to. We may want to, but can we afford to?

LANDER

Oh, can we afford not to? I think that's really the issue is-- is it's one thing to cut one's budget to be able to make ends meet in a certain way. But as a nation, if we're not investing in the future, and we end up balancing the budget, but end up without the technology base for the future that's gonna create new industries, that's gonna be a pyrrhic victory. We-- we will not give our children a very good country if we give our children a country with too much debt, but we will also not serve our children well if we give them a country that does not have this innovative, this driving spark for science and technology and innovation.

RATHER

What about the argument that goes along these lines, yes, yes, doctor, I understand what you're saying, but this is better done by the private sector.

LANDER

Some things are better done by the private sector. Let's-- let's ask what should be done in the public sector, what should be done in the private sector? What has worked in this country is a fabulous partnership between the public and the private. Some things belong in the public domain. If I'm gonna create basic knowledge how information is encoded in DNA I can't control it, I can't patent it. Therefore if I'm a company I can't invest in basic research. I shouldn't invest. I can't go to my shareholders with a straight face and say, "I should be using shareholder dollars to invest in basic research," because when I discover it it's gonna leak out and be available to many, many people.

By contrast I should invest in a particular drug in a bottle that I can patent, put into a clinical trial and sell because I can own and appropriate that. We have public goods and we have private goods. To make science work we need both.

RATHER

Give me the argument that says basic scientific research is something we shouldn't be cutting; indeed we should be increasing our investment in.

LANDER

The argument I think is pretty clear. No entrepreneur in this country can afford to create the basic knowledge that they need in developing new drugs for cancer, if we care about American health; in developing new materials if we care about advanced manufacturing in this country; in developing the next generation of cutting edge computers that are going to run at speeds or have architectures. You can't ask a start up to do that because they can't possibly mount the capital to do it. We are investing and we're gonna to see that return back , the return on investment, the ROI on that investment , is positive and large and we see it in companies , we see it in tax dollars, we see it in jobs .

RATHER

So where does the administration, President Barack Obama stand in this?

LANDER

I think the president has been clear about the fact; his state of the union address was very clear about the fact that we have to be fiscally responsible as a nation and that fiscal responsibility both means tightening up some things and also increasing our investments in others. I think, he put it better than I did when he said if the plane is overweight, you don't cut off the engine you know, and throw off the engine because it may make you feel good for the moment, you'll get a bit of a lift from the lack of weight of the engine, but you're going to notice after awhile the lack of that engine. So the President said that in the state of the Union. And I think it's very clear that he understands the need to do both of those things. Now it's a more complicated message. Maybe it's easy to say let's cut everything and bring it back, every family has to live on its budget. Well nations aren't families in that way. Nations have the ability to borrow and some borrowing makes sense. If I'm borrowing for productive investment, I owe that to my children.

RATHER

Well true or untrue, that there was a time not too long ago when on issues of science, basic research of science, and maybe - - particularly medical science, there was bipartisan agreement.

LANDER

Very much. Very, very much.

RATHER

Republican, Democrats together and those in between said, "Look, this is off the boards for partisan politics."

LANDER

Oh, it was. It's very common to see that the president's - the president would send up a budget, the Democratic president might send up a budget, and a Republican controlled congress would increase the budget for science. That was not an unusual thing at all. But think there are a lot of people who are frustrated about the budget right now, who are concerned about it. I think when they take a hard look as opposed to a first pass; the first pass is let's just cut everywhere. When you take a hard look and you ask, there are consequences to the cuts you make, there are returns to the investment you make. Well, when people get to take the time to think about those I think they will understand that they are part of an American bi-partisan tradition since WWII that this would be a terrible time to suddenly abandon.

RATHER

Let's talk about competition. Who around the world are our major scientific competitors? Who has the potential to overtake us, particularly in the genome area?

LANDER

I don't think about it as competition in the science, knowledge is knowledge. But where I do think about it as competition is economically. If we were to let up on the gas, if we were to say let other nations invent things, I think we're going to see a tremendous impact on our economy from that. Because the people who then start companies, they're the smart young graduate students in programs, and if best programs are in China, and the best programs are in Germany, they're going to start their companies there. And once you lose that advantage, we're a magnet in this country. People want to be here 'cause there are other people like them. There are other people who see the future and think anything's possible. If we were to ever lose that asset, that America is the shining beacon of innovation, no amount of money could buy that back.

RATHER

Are you worried that we're falling behind in the teaching of science? I mean, I see something in the paper almost every other day that says our students in science, they're falling behind in interest in science and they're falling behind in ability in science. You agree with that?

LANDER

Sadly I do. There's so much we could be doing. I mean, science teachers. We don't have enough science teachers who are really well qualified in science. There are some great programs that have started around this country where they catch people early in their college career who are doing a college degree in science and say, "You can also study teaching at the same time." Texas started a program like this called You Teach, which has been a model for-- for many other

universities. There is a hunger on the part of young people to teach. And I gotta say it'd be nice if we paid them well.

RATHER

Over the next five or ten years, where does genome research go and how do we benefit from it?

LANDER

I'm pretty careful about making promises because people get the notion that when genome research is-- is roaring it's gonna produce cures in the next five years or ten years. That's not fundamentally what's gonna happen. What genome research has done is it's given us the ability for the first time to figure out what's broken. We have been shooting in the dark with therapeutics. We try to make drugs, but we don't actually know what's wrong.

Knowledge gives rise to therapy. But it does it over timeframes of 30 years. When scientists discovered the basis of infectious disease in microorganisms it was about 50 years before we had antibiotics. Now-- I ask you, 50 years, you might say, boy, that's a long time, how can we-- on the other hand, after-- you have antibiotics, infectious disease in the developed world was a totally different thing. Parents didn't watch their children die of things. There's no way to accelerate some of that. You've gotta get a foundation, you've gotta understand the mechanism of disease, you gotta begin to work to alter that. When I look at this I say we'll see returns on it in the next five years and ten years, but that's not why I do this. I do this for my children and I do this for my children's children. The real test is for my children, when they're in their 60s, will cancer be the sort of condition it is today where you look at it and you say my God I probably will die from this? Or will it be a condition where we have combination drugs, like we have for AIDS today, and you say I probably will live with this. I'm gonna die of something else.

RATHER (ON CAMERA)

DR. ERIC LANDER. I'LL BE BACK WITH AN UPDATE ON A NEW EFFORT TO FIGHT CHILDHOOD PROSTITUTION. THAT'S NEXT.

PORNLAND UPDATE ACT 4:

RATHER (ON CAMERA)

AND FINALLY TONIGHT, AN UPDATE TO OUR REPORT ON THE TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN IN THE ILLEGAL SEX TRADE.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

A YEAR AGO WE TRAVELED TO PORTLAND OREGON TO TELL YOU THE STORY OF HOW THE CITY HAD BECOME A HUB FOR GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN CAUGHT UP IN THE WORLD OF PROSTITUTION.

THERE WE MET SERGEANT DOUG JUSTUS OF THE PORTLAND POLICE, WHO WAS LEADING EFFORTS TO RESCUE THESE GIRLS.

DOUG JUSTUS

Well these are kids, okay. These are kids that are ten, twelve, thirteen, fourteen years old. It is the most troubling job I've ever done in police work. It drives me crazy. It keeps me awake at night.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

SINCE THAT REPORT RAN, SERGEANT JUSTUS HAS RETIRED, BUT HE CONTINUES TO BE AN ACTIVE ADVOCATE FOR-THESE GIRLS.

JUST LAST WEEK HE WAS ON CAPITOL HILL TESTIFYING IN SUPPORT OF A BILL DESIGNED TO COMBAT THE DOMESTIC SEX TRAFFICKING OF MINORS.

JUSTUS

It is so important that we pass this bill. These are our kids, our children.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE BILL WOULD GIVE MILLIONS OF FEDERAL DOLLARS TO TRAFFICKING HOT SPOTS LIKE PORTLAND FOR LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT... AS WELL AS ESTABLISH SHELTERS SO THAT THESE YOUNG VICTIMS CAN ESCAPE THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION.

ONE OF THE SENATORS BEHIND THE BILL WAS OREGON'S RON WYDEN, WHO WAS DRIVEN TO ACTION ON THIS NATIONAL ISSUE BY THE PROBLEMS IN HIS HOME STATE.

SENATOR WYDEN

That's why it's important that the United States Congress be a better and smarter partner in helping all of you in local communities. And that's essentially what our legislation would do.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE BILL HAS BI-PARTISAN BACKING AND ITS SUPPORTERS SAY THEY ARE HOPEFUL IT CAN BECOME LAW...

RATHER (ON CAMERA)

WE'LL BE FOLLOWING THIS STORY AND LET YOU KNOW THE PROGRESS OF THE BILL. IN THE MEANTIME, THAT'S OUR REPORT FOR TONIGHT. FROM NEW YORK, FOR HDNET. DAN RATHER REPORTING. GOOD NIGHT.