

The background of the slide is a stylized, slightly blurred American flag with red and white stripes and a blue field with white stars.

# **Developing Excitement about Political Activism**

**Michelle S. Ficca, PhD, RN**

**Bloomsburg University  
Bloomsburg, PA**

# Challenge

- **Lack of student understanding of the political process and health policy impact on patients**
- **Lack of student enthusiasm related to the political process**

# Background

## **GOALS:**

***Understand the political process and its use in nursing practice and health policy***

***Awareness of the impact of the political process and health policy on clients***

***Advocate for the health of the people of the nation, state, and local area***

# **In the beginning . . . .**

- **Nightingale**
  - Aimed to use the lessons taught by war to prepare and influence Parliament and the military
- **Walker and Choate (1984)**
  - Nurses' lack of political impact may be attributed to the lack of socialization in the educational process focusing on nurses as policymakers

# **And throughout time**

- ***Institute of Medicine report (2010)***
  - ***Nurses need "to ensure the delivery of safe, patient-centered care across settings..... Patient needs have become more complicated, and nurses need to attain requisite competencies.....These competencies include leadership, health policy, system improvement, research and evidence-based practice, and teamwork and collaboration....."***

# **Recommendations from Professional Organizations**

- **American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN)**
- **National League for Nursing (NLN)**
- **American Nurses Association (ANA)**
- **National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculty (NONPF)**

# Responses from Students

- **Our Experiences**
  - **Discomfort**
  - **Lack of exposure**
  - **“Dull”**
  - **Lack of awareness of responsibilities as a nurse**
  - **Lack of knowledge**



# Conclusions

- **It is essential for professional practice for nurses and students in nursing to understand the political process, legislation, and health policy in order to be a change agent and advocate for our patients**
- **“Everything is political”**
- **Participation and enacting change is viewed as difficult**



# The Curriculum

## Sophomore and Junior Years

- **Focus: *state legislation and health policy that impacts individuals and families***
- **Courses:**
  - **Class time and material devoted to the political process and professional communication**

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- **Focus is integration of sociocultural, ethnic, legal, political, and economic principles into the health care of developing families and adults**

- Assignment: letter to legislator addressing an issue of adults, women, or children*

# Senior Year

– **Focus** – ***federal legislation and health policy, health care delivery, and economics; public health policy and impact on communities***

– **Courses**

- **Class time and material devoted to federal legislative process;**

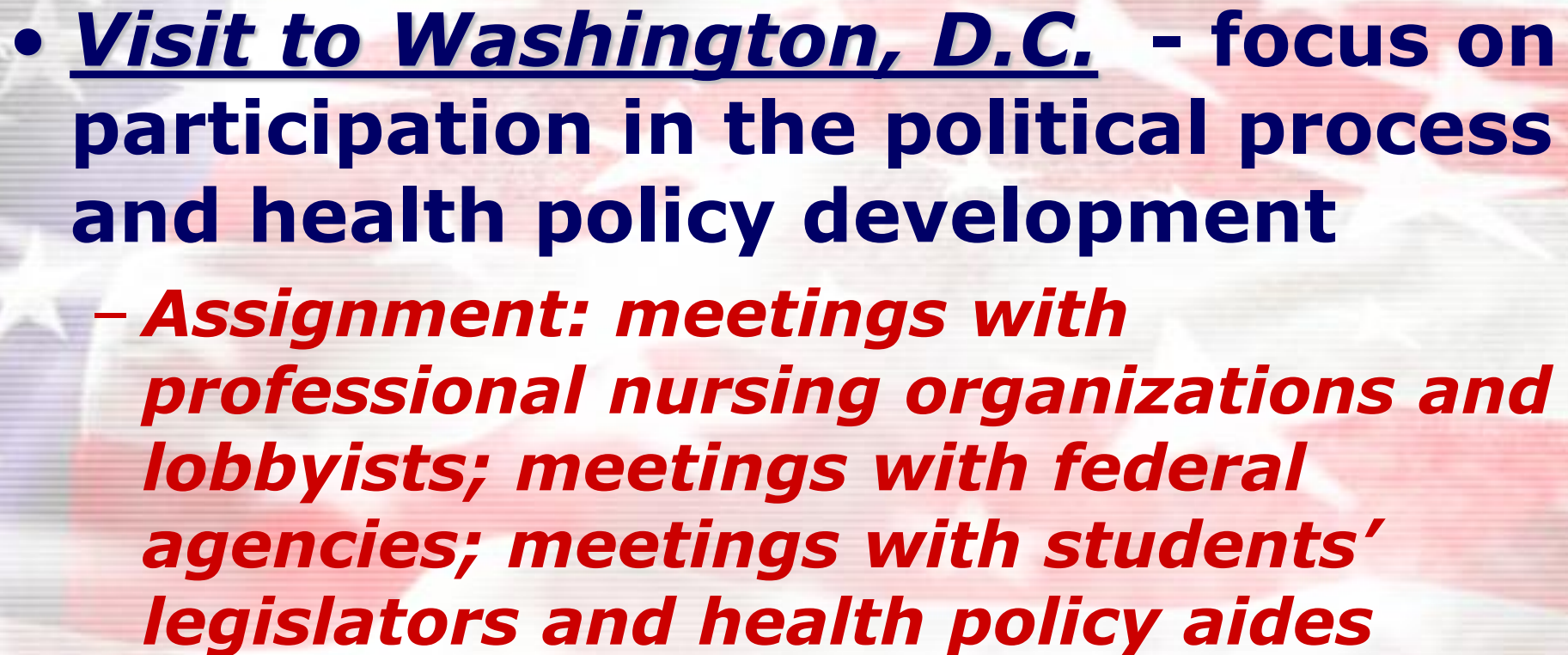
  - ***Assignment: health policy analysis and letter to federal legislator***

- **Assessment of a community**

  - ***Development of an intervention to meet the needs of the community***

- **Class time and activities related to political advocacy, health policy development, and the nursing leadership role**
  - ***Assignment: analysis of their individual and collective role in interactions with legislators***



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- **Visit to Washington, D.C.** - focus on participation in the political process and health policy development
    - ***Assignment: meetings with professional nursing organizations and lobbyists; meetings with federal agencies; meetings with students' legislators and health policy aides***

# **Graduate Level**

- **Focus is on direct involvement in professional organizations and actively participating in influencing health policy development/change**
  - **Students attend Lobby Day at the state level; professional organizations' national meetings; Day on the Hill**

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- **Focus is on the assessment and identification of needs of the community**
    - **Based on assessment data, students identify areas of concern and develop plans to address the concerns in collaboration with local governments/agencies**

# **Opportunities**

- **Progressive knowledge about the political process and how policy impacts individuals, families, aggregates, and communities**
- **Direct observation of the process**
- **Enthusiasm and excitement**
- **Civically engaged as a nurse and a citizen**



# Recommendations

- **Integrate the political advocacy focus throughout the curriculum**
- **Establish and maintain contact with legislators and legislator's aides**
- **Debriefing session**
- **Faculty role-modeling**
- **Excitement and enthusiasm rub off!!**

# Questions

