



Congressman Tim Ryan

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Constituent Update

November 26, 2003

A Bad Deal For Seniors, A Bad Deal For Medicare

I did not vote in favor of the Republican sponsored prescription drug bill. Despite an aggressive advertising campaign -- led by the pharmaceutical industry and other special interest groups -- that portrayed this bill as the long awaited answer for our nation's seniors who need and deserve prescription drug coverage, the simple truth is: *this bill is not in the best interest of our nation's seniors*. It falls shamefully short of providing real benefits.

Presenting the most sweeping changes to our Medicare program in history, the prescription drug bill, passed by the House in the wee hours of the morning of November 22, will not lower the cost of prescription drugs for our seniors. What it does do, however, is dismantle the existing Medicare program, forcing many of our elderly into HMO's. Good news for the profit driven managed care system, not good news for seniors.

It is unconscionable that seniors are being led to believe that \$400 billion is going directly to pay for drugs—but *this is simply not true*. The bill instead includes provisions to lure private health insurance plans to participate in Medicare and to create Health Savings Accounts that will threaten existing employer coverage. Under the agreement, Medicare will become a voucher program with coverage gaps excluding those most in need. Beneficiaries with drug costs ranging from \$2,250 to \$5,100 will receive no coverage, yet they will be forced to still pay monthly premiums. For example, an individual beneficiary will pay \$420 in premiums with a yearly deductible of \$250. After the yearly deductible is met, the beneficiary will still have to pay 25% of their drug costs up to \$2250, after which the individual pays 100% of the prescription cost (while still paying premiums) until drug expenses reach \$5100. If you think this is hard to understand, you are right...and you are not alone. The plan is complicated and confusing, but it's greatest shortcoming is that it is wholly inadequate in providing prescription drug relief for seniors.

I was elected to Congress to represent the best interests of my constituents, this is why I voted against the prescription drug bill.

“Picture of the Week”



November 21, 2003: Working late into the night, Congressman Tim Ryan meets with his staff to consider the evening's schedule. Featured prominently in the Congressman's front office is a Don Drumm original sun sculpture on loan from the Akron artist's studio.

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8:00 AM-10:30 AM Monday, November 24
Kent State University, Trumbull Campus
Classroom Admin Bldg.
4313 Mahoning Avenue, NW, Warren, OH

8:00 AM-10:30 AM, Monday, December 1
NEOUCOM, Conference Center
4209 State Route 44 Rootstown, OH

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