

LCAO Urges Congress to Proceed Carefully with Medicare Changes

November 13, 2003

Dear Representative/Senator:

The undersigned members of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations urge you to ensure that appropriate process is followed before the Medicare prescription drug bill (H.R.1/S.1) is brought before the House and Senate for a vote.

This legislation will be the “biggest change in Medicare since its inception 38 years ago,” which is why it is important that it be done correctly and why it is absolutely essential that every Member of Congress and the American public have time to read and analyze the bill.

All too often, large end-of-the-year bills are rushed from Conference to the floor with no time for Members of Congress, let alone the public, to know what is in them. The result can be serious mistakes, bad policy, and severe embarrassment to Members. The failure to include a tax credit for low-income children in this year’s tax bill, for example, has been an endless source of controversy and anger.

We ask Members of Congress to pledge that the final vote on this massive 800-1,200 page bill not occur before the nation has had at least one week to start to understand it. If necessary, parliamentary procedures should be invoked to ensure that this time is available.

Next year, there can be no excuse that “I did not know what was in the bill.” Members of Congress can ensure an intelligent explanation and debate. It is up to you.

Sincerely,

*AFL-CIO
AFSCME Retiree Program
Alliance for Retired Americans
American Federation of Teachers Program on Retirement and Retirees
American Association for International Aging
American Geriatrics Society
American Society of Consultant Pharmacists
American Society on Aging
Association for Gerontology and Human Development
in Historically Black Colleges and Universities
Association of Jewish Aging Services of North America
B'nai B'rith
Eldercare America
FamiliesUSA
Gerontological Society of America
Gray Panthers
National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys
National Association for Hispanic Elderly
National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers
National Association of Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Directors
National Association of Retired Federal Employees*

National Association of Senior Companion Project Directors
National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs
National Caucus and Center on Black Aged
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Senior Citizens Law Center
OWL, the voice of midlife and older women
United Jewish Communities
Volunteers of America