



President
Barbara J. Easterling

Secretary-Treasurer
Ruben Burks

December 1, 2009

Dear Senator,

The Alliance for Retired Americans, on behalf of its nearly four million members throughout the nation, opposes the motion by Senator John McCain to commit the Patient Protection and Affordable Care America Act, H.R. 3590, to the Finance Committee. We urge its prompt defeat by the Senate.

The McCain motion to commit would seriously undermine important, substantive, and positive changes in the health care needs of older Americans contained in the bill, none more important than proposed Medicare improvements. In fact, the McCain motion would increase health care burdens on Medicare beneficiaries in several instances. The McCain motion would, for the first time, subject Medicare Part D prescription drug premiums to means testing, causing a rise in premiums for many older Americans. In addition, the motion to commit would halt indexing to Medicare Part B physicians services premiums, causing even more seniors to pay higher premiums, which currently can be as much as \$300 per month. Furthermore, the McCain motion would continue the wasteful Medicare Advantage overpayments that currently threaten the financial stability of the Medicare Trust Fund.

The Alliance supports provisions in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act that improve health care for older Americans such as allowing Medicare beneficiaries to keep their choice of doctors, lowering prescription drug costs, eliminating copayments for preventive screenings, expanding access to long term supports and service, and providing assistance for pre-Medicare eligible early retirees. All of these improvements will not be possible should the McCain motion pass.

The legislation does not cut Medicare benefits. With the expected rising costs of Medicare, the legislation slows the rate of the program's growth without reducing benefits. The McCain motion would actually undercut fiscally responsible attempts to meet the challenges of providing health care for older Americans.

The Alliance for Retired Americans is committed to enacting legislation that improves the quality of life for retirees and all Americans. Defeat of the McCain motion to commit the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to the Finance Committee will directly benefit our members and more than forty million older Americans. If we can be of assistance, please contact Richard Fiesta, Director of Government and Political Affairs, at the Alliance.

Sincerely yours,

Handwritten signature of Barbara J. Easterling in black ink.

Barbara J. Easterling
President

Handwritten signature of Ruben Burks in black ink.

Ruben Burks
Secretary-Treasurer

Handwritten signature of Edward F. Coyle in black ink.

Edward F. Coyle
Executive Director