

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 15, 2011

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Madam Secretary:

Recently you wrote an editorial for *Politico* about improving Medicare. In the article, you stated: "There's a right way to reform Medicare and a wrong way." We write to you today to voice our concern about so-called "improvements" to the Medicare program that would radically change Medicare for current seniors.

As you are aware, health care spending is one of the main drivers of continued deficits. Recently, President Obama announced a second budget plan to address deficit reduction. A foundational aspect of this plan centers on changes in Medicare that would adversely affect seniors, one of which is a radical restructuring of the Part D program. While the details are vague at best, we do know that the President plans to fundamentally change the most successful part of the Medicare program overnight by implementing Medicaid-style price controls in the prescription drug benefit. We are unalterably opposed to this drastic and immediate action which threatens the stable drug coverage of millions of American seniors.

From the standpoint of hindsight, the Medicare Part D program is performing much better than anyone would have predicted. Principled opponents, as the President acknowledged, were opposed to creating a universal entitlement that was inadequately financed, thus adding trillions of dollars to the unfunded liability of the Medicare program. Nonetheless, aside from the issue of the entitlement expansion, the efficient delivery of the drug benefit through competitive private plans in a consumer driven market vindicated the design of the drug program.

Medicare Part D created a competitive marketplace for private drug plans and its success is undeniable: total program costs are now over 40 percent below initial estimates, and pricing competition continues to control cost growth; 90 percent of seniors have Part D coverage or its equivalent, with surveys regularly reporting high satisfaction rates; and the program provides significant savings to low-income seniors as well as valuable disease management tools that not only control costs but also improve quality.

As President Obama and other Democrats engage in a disingenuous campaign against Medicare, placing political gain over the security of our entitlement programs, we are profoundly dismayed that he would argue for such a profound reconstruction of this successful program. Medicaid-style price controls will ultimately lead to poorer quality of life for seniors.

Without action, the Medicare program will become insolvent in 2024, and seniors will not have access to the health care they so desperately need. In addressing our significant long term debt and entitlement issues, we urge you to match your rhetoric with your action and move to protect and preserve Part D for current and future Medicare beneficiaries. That is the right way to reform Medicare.

Sincerely,



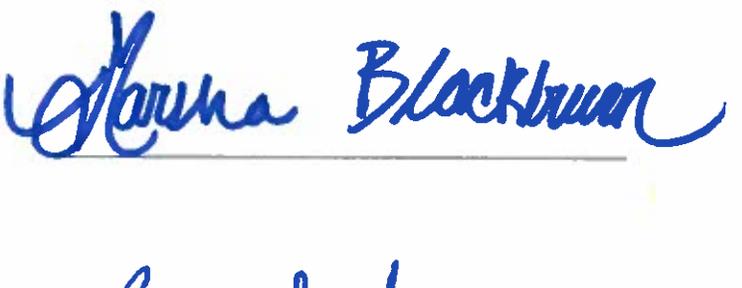






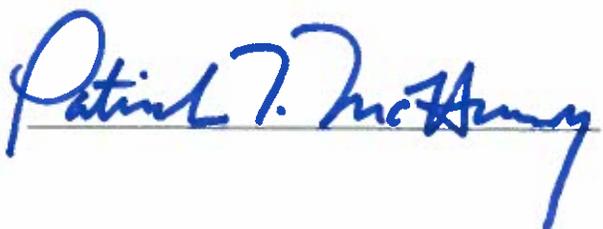












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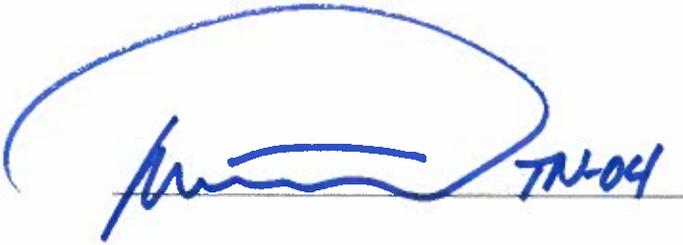
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