



Marsha Blackburn

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

BLACKBURN, COALITION STAND FOR RESPONSIBLE MEDICARE REFORM

Package Must Include Quality Care, Market Based Reforms, and Spending Caps

WASHINGTON, DC - Representative Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) joined Representative Pat Toomey (R-PA) and several House colleagues today to reaffirm support for Medicare reform that not only provides affordable health care assistance for seniors in need but is also fiscally responsible.

"Americans have rejected universal, one size fits all health care in the past and they will do so again," Blackburn said. "What seniors and taxpayers want is aid for seniors who truly are in need. Medicare reform should provide assistance for those most in need and work to decrease prescription costs for all by introducing market-based reforms. Price controls and mandates will not reduce costs or expand options. Competition is key to decreasing out-of-pocket expenses for seniors and protecting access to the best quality care. Creating a costly program laden with regulations will not make health care more affordable, it will reduce choices and weaken what is undeniably the most progressive, comprehensive health care system in the world."

The House and Senate are currently in conference to reach an agreement on Medicare reform that includes a prescription drug benefit for seniors. Blackburn and her colleagues have asked U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL) to ensure that the final agreement include:

- 1) A policy of no price controls on the U.S. drug industry to ensure continued research and development of innovative new lifesaving pharmaceuticals.
- 2) A policy that requires Medicare to compete with private insurers after the year 2010 so that seniors and consumers have a wide array of choices while taxpayer costs are reduced through competition.
- 3) A generous expansion of health care savings accounts to give health care consumers more options in choosing health plans and coverage that meets their individual needs.
- 4) A cost control cap that guarantees program costs will not exceed \$400 billion over 10 years.

Blackburn commended Representative Pat Toomey (R-PA) for his leadership in this effort. "Medicare reform must include true reforms that provide access, choice, and quality care for seniors," Blackburn said. "These goals are not contrary to fiscal responsibility."

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