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For Immediate Release

March 23, 2004

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STARK STATEMENT ON 2004 MEDICARE TRUSTEES REPORT

Washington, D.C. – Today, **Representative Pete Stark (D-CA)**, **Senior Democrat** on the **Joint Economic Committee**, made the following statement in response to the release of the Medicare Trustees Report on the solvency of Medicare:

“Today’s Medicare Trustees Report indicates that Medicare’s solvency has decreased from 2026 to 2019. Let’s give credit where credit is due for this change. It’s all due to the Bush Administration.

“President Bush’s economic policies have been a failure. His inability to regenerate jobs and put our nation’s workers on sound financial footing is directly reducing revenues coming into the federal government. That directly decreases Medicare’s solvency.

“Passage of his Medicare prescription drug bill is also at fault. That law lavishes billions of dollars on HMOs – \$46 billion according to the Administration’s own estimates – most of which comes directly out of the Trust Fund. Despite this fact, Republican rhetoric continues to claim that HMOs and PPOs are the solution to Medicare’s future financial challenges. In other words, the part Republicans are bragging would save Medicare money is actually costing the program billions of dollars.

“Once again, the Republican spin on Medicare today doesn’t match the numbers. But, I guess we shouldn’t be surprised given their track record on suppressing information to advance their own political agenda.”

The Joint Economic Committee, established under the Employment Act of 1946, was created by Congress to review economic conditions and to analyze the effectiveness of economic policy.

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