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Seniors Newsletter



44TH DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA • FALL 2003
CONGRESSMAN KEN CALVERT

Dear Seniors:

As the congressional calendar draws to a close, both the House and the Senate are finalizing legislation important to all Americans—Medicare reform. At the time this letter went to press, the legislation was in Conference as Members continue to negotiate the differences in the two bills passed by the House and the Senate.

Just as Congress delivers good news to seniors about Medicare reform, there has also been good news about the economy. The third quarter reported a phenomenal 7.2% growth, the largest growth since 1984. Tax relief and economic growth have boosted real disposable income, which is up 5.8 percent in 2003. The positive news of economic recovery is coupled by progress on the war on terror. Although recently there has been increased hostility in parts of Iraq, progress is being made. Some have called on the U.S. to leave Iraq but leaving now would only leave behind a breeding ground for terrorists and would demonstrate weakness to the exact people who wish to harm us. The U.S. must remain steadfast in our mission to stabilize Iraq and turn the country over to a willing and capable Iraqi leadership. We must all remain supportive of our troops who have fought brilliantly and continue to work towards a free and democratic Iraq.

As the Chairman on the Subcommittee on Water and Power on the Resources Committee, I am continuing to push through a bill that would ensure a safe, reliable water supply for California and the West. I also support a bill that would keep banks out of real estate; a bill that would allow tax credits for investment in private space transportation companies; providing funding for the improvement of transportation in Southern California; and promoting math, science and technology education for our future workers. I look forward to accomplishing my current goals in Congress as well as working with you in the community on future goals important to our area and the country.

Sincerely,



This Letter

- MEDICARE REFORM
- IRAQ UPDATE

I encourage you to contact me to voice your opinion on issues that matter to you. As your Representative in Congress, it is critical that I hear your concerns. Please contact me through my website at <http://www.house.gov/calvert> or at one of the following locations:

WASHINGTON, DC
2201 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-1986
Fax: (202) 225-2004

RIVERSIDE COUNTY
3400 Central Ave., Ste 200
Riverside, CA 92506
Phone: (909) 784-4300
Fax: (909) 784-5255

ORANGE COUNTY
100 Avenida Presidio, Ste A
San Clemente, CA 92672
Phone: (949) 496-2343
Fax (909) 784-5255



Medicare Reform Update

"We believe that the legislation that has emerged after long negotiations will go a long way toward relieving these burdens for millions of older and disabled Americans and their families."

—AARP Statement on Medicare legislation, 11/19/03

House and Senate negotiators are working to finalize historic legislation that will provide, for the first time ever, a \$400 billion prescription drug coverage under Medicare. A few key provisions include:

According to AARP the bill will provide substantial relief for those with very high drug costs, and will provide modest relief for millions more. Some examples:

- A senior who has no drug coverage and monthly drug costs of \$200 would save more than \$1,700 on drug costs each year.
- A senior who has no drug coverage and monthly drug cost of \$800 would save nearly \$5,900 on drug costs each year.

Seniors are protected from out-of-pocket catastrophic costs—Medicare will cover 95% of costs over \$3,600.

Seniors who want to stay in the current Medicare program and add prescription drug coverage will be able to do so. But seniors who want enhanced benefits, such as protection against high out of pocket expenses, or seniors who want to participate in private plans will be able to choose those options. If seniors have more choices, health care plans will compete for their business with better coverage at affordable prices – helping to hold the costs of Medicare in check and stabilizing the financial health of the system so it is there for future generations.

After passage of the bill, full Medicare prescription drug coverage will take effect in 2006. To ensure that seniors get immediate relief from the cost of prescription drugs, all seniors will have the option to receive a Medicare-approved drug discount card that saves them 10-25% of the cost of their medicines. If you have questions about the Medicare program please contact my office or 1-(800) MEDICARE.

News From Iraq

Recent news coverage in Iraq has shown hostilities escalating while omitting the progress being made for a free and stable Iraq. Ninety percent of the resistance is located in an area known as the "Sunni Triangle"—primarily in Ar Ramadi, Baghdad and Tikrit. Large numbers of our forces have been positioned to counter and decrease attacks on our troops and innocent Iraqi's. Our forces report that the insurgents, mostly unemployed young men being paid to attack coalition forces, are losing this battle. Some facts about the progress in Iraq:

- ⇒ **Security** – Iraqi security forces now outnumber U.S. Forces in Iraq.
- ⇒ **Electricity** – The Coalition Provisional Authority has achieved its initial goal of surpassing pre-war peak output levels.
- ⇒ **Education** – School registration and attendance is stabilizing at approximately 3.6 million primary and 1.5 million secondary students. A record 97,000 Freshmen applications submitted to the Ministry of Higher Education for the 03-04 academic year; 63,000 submitted last year.
- ⇒ **Healthcare** – Healthcare is 100% of pre-war levels, public spending is 26 times higher than under Saddam Hussein and doctors salaries are eight times higher.
- ⇒ **Water** –12.9 million liters of potable water per day were available pre war. In November the level rose to 21.3 million liters.



CONGRESSMAN CALVERT meets with veterans to discuss issues important to seniors and veterans.