



CARTER COURIER

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LETTER FROM THE CONGRESSMAN

Dear Friends,

It has been a busy two weeks in Congress as we have continued to debate annual spending bills that will fund the federal government in the coming fiscal year. Unfortunately, many of these bills far exceed the President's request by billions of dollars and risk being vetoed. It is important that Congress refrain from the desire to spend more taxpayer money without taking responsibility for its future impacts.

Other than annual spending bills, my conservative colleagues and I fought vigorously to oppose the Democrats' plans to slash Medicare funding in favor of their universal healthcare plan. I discuss this debate further inside the newsletter. Upon completion of this week's legislative business, Congress will begin the August recess and district work period. I look forward to visiting with many of you in the district and the opportunity to serve you better.

As always, I thank all of you in the 31st District for the opportunity to serve you in Congress and look forward to spending the next few weeks back home in Central Texas.

Until next week,



SUPPORT SENIORS OR CHILDREN: A FALSE CHOICE

This week in Washington there was a lot going on. Buried amongst appropriation bills, energy bills and the farm bill, there was a very important piece of legislation that will affect many seniors in Central Texas. Democrats passed a bill that dramatically expands the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) by allowing families who make up to \$82,000 a year, four times the poverty level, to qualify for taxpayer-funded healthcare.

In order to pay for this drastic increase in government funding, Democrats have chosen to slash the highly successful Medicare Advantage program and provide free healthcare to millions of illegal immigrants across the country.

The Medicare Advantage plans are health plan options that are part of the Medicare program. They are available in many areas including Texas and may cover more services and have lower out-of-pocket costs than the original Medicare plan. Currently there are over 3 million seniors in America who are enrolled in this plan, including 16,000 in Central Texas.

According to press reports, this bill cuts Medicare Advantage by \$157 billion—resulting in higher co-pays, loss in specific health-

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care benefits, less quality and choice of programs, and fewer choices among doctors. And this bill goes even further to cut Medicare plans including:

- Medicare cuts of \$6.5 billion to skilled nursing facilities.
- Medicare Part B cuts for senior by \$9.6 billion, including payments for oxygen and brachytherapy.
- Medicare cuts of \$3.6 billion to the end-stage renal disease program for seniors.
- Medicare cuts of \$7.5 billion to home health and more cuts to end-stage renal programs.

And that's not all. Not only does the Democrat SCHIP bill make drastic cuts to the Medicare Advantage plan, it also uses taxpayer money to provide health benefits for illegal aliens by eliminating the requirement that persons applying for such benefits provide proof of citizenship or nationality. I have long fought for meaningful immigration reform that closes our borders and enforces existing laws and in no way believe we should reward those who illegally come into America by giving them benefits that should be reserved for citizens. This legislation isn't a solution to the problem. If anything, this bill undermines our border security efforts and imposes a tax increase on legal, hard-working Central Texans.

In 1996, the Republican-led Congress passed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act to limit federal benefits to those who are lawfully in the United States. This Democrat bill rolls back these reforms by doling out billions of dollars to states who then have the option of whether or not to verify that a person is an American citizen before providing taxpayer-funded health benefits like Medicaid and SCHIP.

I want to make it clear that I believe that every child deserves access to affordable healthcare, and that there is nothing more important than the well-being and the future of our children. But I don't believe that Congress should cut successful Medicare programs and provide free healthcare to illegal immigrants. That is why I voted for a Republican alternative bill to reauthorize the SCHIP program and provide states with the resources they need to be able to continue to provide healthcare coverage for children. Our alternative would protect seniors from Medicare Advantage cuts and leave in place the requirement for proof of citizenship from to receive benefits.

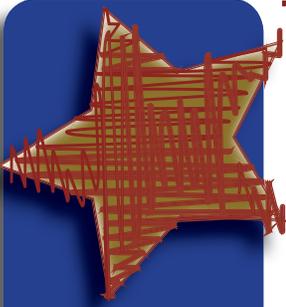
Unfortunately, all my Democratic colleagues delivered and voted for was a bill that works against seniors, working families and taxpayers -- something I cannot and will not support.

DEMOCRAT LEADER ADMITS SUCCESS IN IRAQ COULD BE FAILURE FOR DEMOCRATIC PARTY

This week I made the following statement after House Majority Whip James Clyburn (D-S.C.) said that if General David Petraeus' September report were to paint a positive picture about the progress in Iraq, it would be "a real problem for us." Clyburn then went on to lament that a strongly positive report by Petraeus "likely would split Democrats in the House and impede his party's efforts to press for a timetable to end the war."

"When I hear my colleagues make statements to the press like this, I have to wonder, what are their intentions with our generals and soldiers on the ground in Iraq? Republicans have fought tooth and nail to provide time and support to our American troops, and Democrats made it clear today that they tie their political future to defeat in Iraq. This isn't support. This isn't concern. This isn't what a Congressman is sent to Washington to do. This is nothing more than clear political antics that prove Democrats are out for nothing more than a win for their own party - not for America."

"I have been to Iraq four times, and I have seen first-hand the progress that is being made on the ground. I have seen the Iraqi people help the American soldiers. I have seen evidence that what our soldiers are doing in Iraq is working. And I am not alone. Critics of the war have seen the progress too, and they are telling their story. Democrats need to wake and stop ignoring the facts on the ground. They need to realize that this war is bigger than political games here in Washington."



LISTEN TO MY WEEKLY RADIO ADDRESS

Please click on the link below to listen to my most recent weekly radio address that was sent to local radio and television stations. This week's seven and a half minute address features Congressman Carter discussing the Democrats' SCHIP bill.

<http://carter.house.gov/multimedia/>

INCREASED FUNDS TO LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AMENDMENT PROVIDES ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR INCARCERATION OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

Last week, in a bipartisan effort, I introduced an amendment to the Departments of Commerce, Justice and Science (CJS) Appropriations bill that will increase funding to reimburse state and local government for costs associated with incarcerating illegal aliens by \$55 million, bringing the total amount of reimbursement funding to \$460 million.

We have a huge immigration problem in America, and nowhere is that problem more visible than in border states like Texas and California. Securing our nation's borders is the federal government's responsibility and with that responsibility comes the duty of punishing illegal aliens who endanger our communities through criminal acts. Unfortunately, it is the state and local governments who feel the financial burden of incarcerating the growing number of illegal aliens.

According to the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), in 2006 alone, the uncompensated cost of incarcerating illegal aliens in Texas' state and county prisons amounted to at least \$130.6 million. The State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) is authorized to provide for state and local government costs of incarcerating criminal aliens. However, the real cost of incarcerating undocumented criminal aliens continues to be massively higher than federal funding levels provided through SCAAP. Last year, SCAAP reimbursements for the state of Texas amounted to \$18.6 million, only 14 percent of the total cost of reimbursements. The amendment provides an additional \$55 million for SCAAP, helping to ease the burden on our states, local governments and the law enforcement community.

At a time when state and local governments are being asked to do even more to protect our homeland, it is vital that the federal government provide the critical funding needed to compensate them for the costs of incarcerating illegal criminal immigrants.

OPPOSING CUTS TO MEDICARE ADVANTAGE

Yesterday I opposed a Democrat healthcare bill that could cut Medicare Advantage benefits by \$157 billion, provide healthcare to illegal immigrants and raise taxes on middle class Americans. The Majority's bill dramatically expands the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) by allowing families who make up to \$82,000 a year, four times the poverty level, to qualify for taxpayer-funded health care.

The era of big government is back, and this bill is the first step to ensure that the government has their hand in your healthcare. Not only is this plan the first-step toward a taxpayer-funded universal healthcare system, it also cuts the highly successful Medicare Advantage program for over 3 million seniors and rewards illegal immigrants by supplying them with free healthcare.

According to press reports, Medicare Advantage would be cut by \$157 billion, resulting in higher co-pays, a loss in specific health care benefits, less quality and choice of programs and fewer choices among doctors. In the 31st District of Texas alone, 16,602 seniors would be affected by the dramatic cuts in Medicare Advantage.
