

DINGELL ON RULE SUSPENDING MEDICARE "TRIGGER" FOR 110TH CONGRESS

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July 25, 2008

Washington, D.C. — Rep.

John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, delivered the following statement on the House floor today in support of H.Res. 1368. This legislation would suspend, for the remainder of this Congress, a provision in current law that would require the House to vote on a bill that meets the requirements of the "Medicare 45 percent trigger," which was enacted by a Republican Congress in 2003.

Today we protect Medicare's future. The rule addresses a provision that was slipped into the Republican Medicare Modernization Act (MMA) in the dark of night. It was not in the version of the bill that was passed by the House or by the Senate. It is yet another example of Republican efforts to choke off Medicare -- an automatic "trigger" that requires cuts to the program if general revenues contribute more than 45 percent of Medicare's revenues.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle have long tried to end Medicare, and failing that, to let it wither slowly on the vine. Newt Gingrich said as much in the 1990's, when he was Speaker of the House.

"As required by the MMA provision, the President sent a bill to Congress in February with his proposal to meet the trigger requirements. His bill simply shifted costs to patients, and made no improvements to Medicare; a good example of why this "trigger" doesn't work.

"Democrats know how to manage Medicare — my father wrote the original bill creating it, and we have been fighting to preserve, improve, and protect the program for nearly 50 years. We do not need gimmicks like an arbitrary

‘trigger’ to do so.

“Medicare has protected seniors, improved their health, and helped lift people out of poverty. We must ensure that Medicare beneficiaries continue to have access to their doctor of choice, high-quality hospital care, and prescription drug services.

“I support this rule; and I urge my colleagues to eliminate the ‘trigger’ requirements for the remainder of the year.”

Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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