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Legislative Office

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Dear Senators and Representatives:

Don't be fooled by the so-called Medicare Prescription Drug benefit. There is a reason the drug and insurance industry is running all those ads in favor of it. They are only ones who gain anything under this bill:

It Cuts Existing Coverage for TWU Members. The Congressional Budget Office calculated that the original bill would cause employers to drop existing retiree drug coverage for 32% of those covered. The "fix" in the "compromise" drops that number to 22%. That means 33,000 TWU members would still be expected to lose existing employer-funded retiree drug coverage. A disaster!

Privatization. The bill fulfills Newt Gingrich's dream of causing Medicare to "wither on the vine." It includes requirements and incentives to force people out of Medicare into private insurance plans – not only the "premium support" provisions, but the $12 billion slush fund for the president to bribe and coerce seniors into private plans.

Drug Company Giveaway. The reason drugs are 75% cheaper in Canada is that the Canadian government uses its buying power to negotiate lower rates with drug companies. This bill actually prohibits the U.S. government from negotiating lower prices. The only ones that win are the drug companies!

No Help. In exchange for these devastating changes to the basic Medicare program, seniors will get a prescription drug benefit that will leave one-half of all seniors **paying more** out-of-pocket than they do now and turns over to private insurers the power to decide what drugs to cover, how much to charge and whether to offer coverage at all.

This bill is a lemon! The Transport Workers Union strongly urges you to do everything in your power to kill the Medicare Drug bill in its present form. It is a bad deal for America's seniors. Hardworking Americans cannot afford it.

Sincerely,

Roger Tauss
Legislative Director