

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 2, 2003

**JOIN THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS IN SUPPORT OF
HR 1199, THE MEDICARE RX DRUG BENEFIT AND DISCOUNT ACT**

Dear Democratic Colleague:

We are writing to urge you to join us in support of HR 1199, the Medicare Rx Drug Benefit and Discount Act.

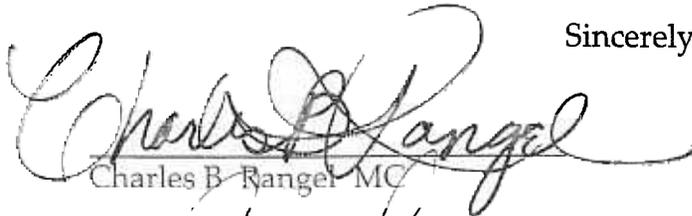
This bill is the same as the Medicare prescription drug package we supported in the 107th Congress. It provides voluntary, comprehensive prescription drug coverage for *all* Medicare beneficiaries. Seniors citizens and people with disabilities understand and trust Medicare. That is why our bill adds a prescription drug benefit that covers drugs in the same fashion as other services are covered in Medicare today. Plus, the drug benefit is comparable to what federal employees receive as well.

But, no need to just take our word for it. Please read the attached letter from the American Federation of Teachers to see why their organization supports HR 1199 as the real prescription to meet Medicare beneficiaries' medication needs.

To view summary materials on HR 1199, please visit the Energy and Commerce Committee Democratic website at:

http://www.house.gov/commerce_democrats/medicarerx/medicarerx.shtml.
If you have any further questions, please contact us directly or speak to any of our staffs.

Sincerely,


Charles B. Rangel, MC

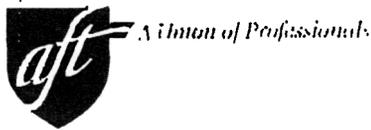

John D. Dingell, MC


Pete Stark, MC


Sherrod Brown, MC


Henry Waxman, MC


Frank Pallone, MC



American Federation
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

AFT Teachers
AFT PSRP
AFT Higher Education
AFT Public Employees
AFT Healthcare

555 New Jersey Ave. N.W.
Washington, DC 20001
202/879-4400
www.aft.org

Sandra Feldman
PRESIDENT

Edward J. McElroy
SECRETARY/TREASURER

Nat LaCour
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

VICE PRESIDENTS
Roger Benson
Mary Bergan
Barbara Bowen
John Cole
Paul E. Cole
Antonia Cortese
Sheryl Davenport
Jesus Delgado Burgos
Maureen Dinnen
Edward Doherty
James E. Dougherty
Walter E. Dunn, Jr.
Al Fondy
Janis K. Garrison
David Gray
Thomas Y. Hobart, Jr.
Sandra C. Irons
Lorenia Johnson
Ted Kirsch
Alan Lubin
Deborah Lynch
Herb Magidson
Jim McGarvey
Tom Mooney
Ruby Newbold
Candice Owley
Sandra Peterson
Maria Portalatin
Marcia B. Reback
Laura K. Rico
William Scheuerman
Kristin Sterling
Lynise A. Sundin
Norman Swenson
Pat L. Tornillo, Jr.
Ann Twomey
Adam Urbanski
Randi Weingarten

May 14, 2003

United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

As the 108th Congress continues its annual debate over the nation's priorities, the enactment of a voluntary, universal, affordable and comprehensive prescription drug benefit in the Medicare program should remain at the top of the list.

Representatives Rangel (D-NY), Dingell (D-MI), and Stark (D-CA) have introduced H. R. 1199 that meets these essential criteria. This proposal includes a \$25 monthly premium, \$100 annual deductible, significant coinsurance (in which Medicare pays 80 per cent of the prescription cost) and an out-of-pocket limit of \$2,000 for beneficiaries. In addition, beneficiaries, who have incomes below 150 percent of the poverty level, are fully subsidized. This is not a small or inexpensive program, but it is one that older Americans both need and deserve.

H. R. 1199 is a prescription drug plan that truly modernizes Medicare by filling a real need and preserving freedom of choice for seniors. It stands in stark contrast to so-called Medicare reform proposals that would force the elderly to leave the existing Medicare program and join expensive HMOs or other forms of managed care in order to get prescription drug coverage. More than 85 percent of our nation's seniors are in traditional Medicare, which allows them to choose their own doctors. Further, these "reform" proposals ignore the fact that HMOs have dropped more than 2.5 million Medicare beneficiaries from their rolls, and many have drastically reduced their coverage of prescription drugs. Also, in many areas of our country, there are no managed care plans available at all. It is essential, therefore, that a voluntary, universal, affordable and comprehensive prescription drug program be available within the existing Medicare program--one of the most successful federal programs ever.

H.R. 1199 meets all of these criteria. On behalf of the 1.2 million members of the American Federation of Teachers, I urge you to support this vital legislation.

Sincerely,

Charlotte J. Fraas
Director, Department of Legislation
SF: kb