

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 149

Expressing the sense of Congress that access to affordable prescription drugs is critical to the quality of life of older Americans and that coverage for prescription drugs should be included in the Medicare Program as soon as possible, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 1, 1999

Ms. STABENOW submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress that access to affordable prescription drugs is critical to the quality of life of older Americans and that coverage for prescription drugs should be included in the Medicare Program as soon as possible, and for other purposes.

Whereas the Medicare program does not currently provide a prescription drug benefit, leaving too many seniors in the United States unable to afford the prescription drugs they need, often forcing them to choose between medicine and important daily needs, such as buying food;

Whereas at least one-third of all Americans age 65 and older pay the entire cost of their medicine at the highest pos-

sible prices, while many bulk purchasers of drugs, including HMO's and the Federal Government, receive generous discounts;

Whereas senior citizens in the United States spend roughly three times as much of their income on health care as do those under the age of 65;

Whereas the average older American depends on 18 prescriptions a year;

Whereas pharmaceuticals represent the fastest growing sector of health care costs in the United States;

Whereas medical care has changed dramatically since the inception of Medicare in 1965—conditions that once required surgery can now be treated with medication—the program needs to be modernized to better meet these new realities; and

Whereas the long-term solution to this problem is creating a prescription drug benefit for the Medicare program: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of Congress that—

3 (1) senior citizens should not be forced to pay
4 a large part of their monthly income for prescription
5 drugs;

6 (2) a top priority for the available budget surplus
7 should be to strengthen and modernize the
8 Medicare program for the future, including adding
9 prescription drug coverage;

1 (3) President Clinton should be commended for
2 introducing a Medicare reform proposal with a pre-
3 scription drug benefit; and

4 (4) Congress should consider legislation to ac-
5 complish this as soon as possible.

