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**SCHAKOWSKY SAYS BUSH ADMINISTRATION MUST REFUND GOVERNMENT THE PRODUCTION COST OF VIDEO NEWS RELEASES PROMOTING GOP DRUG LAW**

**GAO DECLARES CRITICAL COMPONENT OF BUSH ADMINISTRATION PR CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE MEDICARE DRUG LAW PLAN VIOLATED THE LAW**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. - After the General Accounting Office (GAO) declared that taxpayer-funded Video News Releases (VNRs) promoting the Bush Administration's view of the Medicare drug law violated the law, U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today said that President Bush must take decisive action starting with issuing a refund to the Medicare Trust Fund.**

**"For political gains, the Bush Administration hired actors with taxpayer dollars, to play reporters in a fake news story, in order to promote the Republican Medicare drug law and to manipulate public opinion. That is against the law and the General Accounting Office agrees," Schakowsky said.**

**According to the GAO, the VNRs that were distributed by the Department of Health and Human Services to local television stations, and aired in full on some local broadcasts "violated the publicity or propaganda prohibition of the Consolidated Appropriation Resolution of 2003." In addition, the GAO faulted the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for producing these VNRs even though no money was appropriated by Congress for such a purpose, adding that the Anti deficiency Act was violated.**

**"The Bush Administration must immediately refund the Medicare Trust fund the production of these propaganda videos and hold those who violated the law responsible. And President Bush must explain to seniors why his Administration is more interested in promoting its drug bill than saving Medicare beneficiaries money at the pharmacy" Schakowsky said.**