

MAY 31, 2001

SCHAKOWSKY VOWS TO FIGHT SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE PRIVATIZATION SCHEMES

PARTICIPATES IN THREE CHICAGO AREA EVENTS WITH SENIORS, INCLUDING THE LAUNCH OF THE ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS

CHICAGO, IL - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today said that seniors are united against President Bush's privatization schemes guaranteed to lower Social Security benefits and cut Medicare services.

At the Alden North Shore in Skokie, where Schakowsky met and answered questions from seniors, she said, "Social Security and Medicare are two of the most successful programs in the history of our country, and they are being threatened. With low administrative costs, these programs have been able to provide a basic level of financial and health security to seniors, persons with disabilities, and families."

"President Bush has failed to put forward a serious prescription drug plan for seniors and is proposing major changes that will increase administrative costs, promote privatization, and cut benefits under Social Security and Medicare," Schakowsky added.

Following her meeting with seniors in Skokie, Schakowsky was the Keynote speaker at the Metro Seniors in Action luncheon. Schakowsky discussed the political climate in Washington and the Democrats taking control of the Senate following the decision by Senator Jim Jeffords (I-VT) to become an Independent. She also focused on the impact of the tax cut on funding for current and future vital social programs, including a prescription drug benefit under Medicare.

"We need to educate, mobilize and organize. There are powerful forces at work in the White House and Congress. If we let our guard down for one moment, they will win. We will not let the Bush Administration and the Republicans in Congress turn over Social Security to Wall Street and Medicare to the HMOs," Schakowsky said.

Finally, Schakowsky joined AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, and other members of Congress at a news conference to launch the Alliance for Retired Americans, a new 2.5 million-member advocacy group supported by the AFL-CIO and community-based organizations. The Chicago event is only one of more than 20 scheduled to take place throughout the nation demanding that Congress and the President give seniors a prescription drug benefit under Medicare.

"We believe that senior citizens are entitled to an affordable high quality prescription

drug benefit under Medicare. We also believe that doctors know what's best for their patients and that HMOs should not be in the business of approving or denying prescriptions. Working with the Alliance, we will deliver that message to Congress and to the White House, and we will not rest until we are successful in our mission," Schakowsky said.