

SEPTEMBER 27, 2000

SCHAKOWSKY JOINS SENIORS AND DEMOCRATS IN DELIVERING LETTERS, RECEIPTS, AND EMPTY PILL BOTTLES TO THE SPEAKER & CALLING FOR ACTION ON MEDICARE DRUG BENEFIT

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today delivered letters from her constituents to Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL). Schakowsky's constituents called on the Speaker to allow a vote on a real prescription drug benefit under Medicare before Congress adjourns.

Schakowsky was joined by senior citizens from across the country and her Democratic colleagues. They delivered thousands of letters, receipts, and empty pill bottles sent to Washington by seniors being gouged by drug companies.

"In the next two weeks we must deliver to our seniors a prescription drug benefit under Medicare that is universal, affordable, and voluntary. With time running out, let us work to give all seniors real prescription drug coverage," Schakowsky said.

According to Families USA, per person drug expenses for the elderly have grown 116% since 1992, and costs are likely to climb another 165% in the next decade.

Schakowsky is supporting a plan that would allow seniors on Medicare to choose a prescription drug benefit in addition to their current plan. Under the plan, Medicare will pay 50% of all drug costs up to \$5,000, and 100% of all out-of-pocket expenses over \$4,000. Premiums for this option will start at \$26, rising to \$51 once all benefits are fully phased in. The Republican leadership in the U.S. House of Representatives has not yet allowed a vote on the plan to offer a prescription drug benefit under Medicare.