

**MAY 27, 1999**

**SCHAKOWSKY, SANDERS RELEASE LETTER CALLING ON PRESIDENT TO HOLD FIRM IN PROTECTING MEDICARE LETTER SIGNED BY MORE THAN 110 HOUSE MEMBERS**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** U.S. Representatives Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today released a letter signed by more than 110 members of Congress calling on the President to protect the interests of the 39 million seniors and persons with disabilities who rely on Medicare.

The letter calls on the President to reject the disastrous proposals that were nearly approved by the Bipartisan Commission on Medicare as the Administration develops its own plan to save Medicare.

In the letter, members specifically call on the President not to include in his plan any proposals that would turn Medicare into a voucher program, increase the age of eligibility, or impose copayments for home health care.□

The letter also outlines specific measures that the members strongly believe must be included in any plan that the Administration puts forward to save Medicare.□ Such measures include using 15% of the budget surplus to extend the solvency of Medicare, providing an outpatient prescription drug benefit for all Medicare recipients, and increasing the eligibility limit for Medicare's low-income programs.

□ Schakowsky said, "Medicare has been a resounding success in providing health care to the elderly and persons with disabilities.□ We need to improve it, expand it, and protect it from those who purport to save it by turning it over to the HMOs."

The president has announced that his administration is preparing to send a proposal to Congress that will extend the solvency of Medicare.

□ "We urge the President to stand firm on his commitment to save Medicare and reject in his plan those proposals that will put the future of millions of Americans in jeopardy," added Schakowsky.□

The members will soon offer legislation containing the provisions outlined in the letter.□