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## **Seniors and 28 Organizations Expose the Effects of the Current Medicare Prescription Drug Proposal and Call on Senator Grassley to Start Over**

**Des Moines/November 10, 2003**—Iowa Citizen Action Network held a press conference today to expose the growing outrage of Iowans about the so called Medicare reforms being hammered out in a conference committee in Washington, D.C. At the press conference 24 organizations released a joint statement holding Senator Grassley accountable for this current proposal. The senior, farm, religious, and labor organizations called on Grassley to stop the current proposal from moving forward and to start on a new effort that puts seniors and people with disabilities ahead of pharmaceutical and insurance company profits.

Seniors shared their outrage about plans in the proposal to privatize Medicare, to prohibit Medicare from negotiating best prescription drug prices for seniors, and to strip retirees of employer-sponsored prescription drug coverage.

Senior Don Rowen of Des Moines spoke passionately about the attempt to use the prescription drug benefit as a way to privatize Medicare. “This program has meant everything to my generation and has saved the lives and protected the well being of millions. This attempt to do away with this program by starting down the road of privatization is an absolute sham. Any politician who votes for this privatization scheme will regret that vote for the rest of their shortened career. We seniors will not stand for this.”

“They are doing it again. They’re giving us promises to get our vote only to break those promises,” said Frances Hawthorne, a senior from Des Moines. “The way the proposal is written is unacceptable. I think they need to stop, make a promise to start over, and do it right next time.”

Dave Campbell of Saylor Township, a retiree who already has employer-sponsored prescription drug coverage, voiced concern about language in the proposal that encourages employers to drop retiree coverage, “Medicare, even with the proposed prescription drug benefit, is NOT a comparable substitute for many of these employer-sponsored plans. The prescription drug bill should be about improving the health benefits of older Americans, not taking them away!”

Iowa Citizen Action Network will deliver 300 letters to Senator Grassley, hand written by Iowans, calling on him to vote against any privatization of Medicare. The letters will be delivered to Senator Grassley’s Des Moines office later today.

Copies of the joint statement are available from Matt Russell at Iowa Citizen Action Network, 3520 Beaver Ave., Suite D, Des Moines, IA 50310. 515-277-5077 ext. 15. [mrussell@iowacan.org](mailto:mrussell@iowacan.org).

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