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For More Information Contact:
Matt Russell 515-277-5077, ext. 15

**Seniors and Union Members Tell Senator Grassley and President Bush:
Don't Privatize Medicare and Don't Jeopardize
Current Prescription Drug Benefits**

Senator Grassley Sided with President Bush on a Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit That Hurts Seniors and Puts Them at the Mercy of Risky Insurance Companies

Waterloo/August 14, 2003—Iowa seniors and union members held a rally today outside Senator Grassley's office to protest his support of a prescription drug bill they described as a "fraud" instead of a real prescription drug benefit.

Seniors said the bill pushed by the Republican leadership in Congress would privatize Medicare, turn prescription drug benefits over to private insurance companies and leave millions of seniors with thousands of dollars in drug bills. A nonpartisan congressional study also found more than 4.4 million retirees are likely to lose the employer-provided prescription coverage they have now if the bill is enacted.

"We must stop President Bush from moving forward with a risky Medicare privatization scheme that benefits only big pharmaceutical and insurance companies," said Jan Laue, Executive Vice President of the Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO. "This is an insult to America's seniors and working families who need help in covering these out-of-control drug costs."

"Senator Grassley needs to use his leadership as Chair of the Senate Finance Committee to do what's right for our seniors and retirees," said Don Rowen, Iowa Citizen Action Network board Treasurer and a senior citizen. "The current proposal that privatizes Medicare is not what seniors asked for and is not what politicians promised."

The Medicare drug proposal being pushed by Republicans in Congress would:

- Leave millions of seniors with huge drug costs to cover on their own;
- Threaten employer-provided prescription drug coverage for 4.4 million retirees who presently have coverage;
- Increase future premiums by 25 percent if the patient stays in the current Medicare program with the doctors of their choice;
- Prevent our government from reining in prescription drug prices.

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