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EXHIBIT 4

Arm-Twisting and Vote-Switching on RX Drug Entitlement

by David Freddoso
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The final vote on the bill to create the largest new entitlement in decades was 220-215, but it was even closer than that for most of Saturday morning.

Rep. Mike Pence (R.-Ind.), who spearheaded the conservative opposition to the prescription drug entitlement (H.R.?1) in the House, called his own efforts a "successful failure." Pointing out that the conservative opposition to the bill grew by six votes since June, he compared the stand by 25 principled House conservatives against the bill to the battle of the Alamo. The new votes for the bill, whose earlier version passed by just one vote in June, came from Democrats who had opposed it before.

The House leadership had to keep the vote on H.R.?1 open for nearly three hours, during which House leaders and administration officials twisted arms and offered extra pork in exchange for votes. The bill seemed on its way to failure?216 to 218?for two full hours, until some Democrats and a few Republicans changed their votes a few minutes before 6 a.m.

Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson succeeded in wooing several Democrats to vote for the bill who had opposed it in the past. He reportedly did this, House sources tell HUMAN EVENTS, by "handing out" over a billion dollars worth of discretionary spending to anyone willing to switch.

On the Republican side, threats carried the day. That prompted Rep. Pat Toomey (R.-Pa.) and Pence, along with 23 others, to leave the Capitol building and seclude themselves at a Chinese restaurant on Pennsylvania Ave. for part of the evening. They avoided constant reproaches from the likes of Thompson and the House Republican leaders for a few hours, but they could not avoid the hours of threats dealt out on the House floor.

Among those treated most brutally was Rep. Nick Smith (R.-Mich.). Although Smith is retiring next year, his son Brad hopes to win his safe 7th district seat by surviving a crowded Republican primary.

"It's pretty personal," Smith told Human Events. Smith was told that his son would get "almost unlimited financial support, plus some nationally recognized names to endorse him," if Rep. Smith would just vote for the drug bill. "This comes after [Brad] had sold part of his property to put his own $100,000 into his campaign," he said. But when Brad learned about the deal being offered, he called his father. "He said, 'Hey, Dad, you stick to your guns and do the right thing. I don't want to go to Congress that way.' That increased my resolve for sure."

Smith stood firm and voted "no." "The only sad part is that I may have hurt Brad's chances of getting in, because some of the members were pretty adamant that they were going to work to make sure he didn't," said Smith. He would not specify whether the members in question were other Michigan congressmen.

More pressure came down on the conservatives when the National Right to Life Committee announced

it might score the vote on its congressional scorecard. In other words, congressmen voting "no" on the bill would look like they had cast a vote against the right to life.

"I'm very curious about what their position on the omnibus [spending] bill will be," deadpanned Pence, one of the most outspoken pro-lifers in Congress. "I want to protect my pro-life voting record."

Among the Republicans who changed their votes on the floor were Trent Franks (Ariz.) and Butch Otter (Idaho). Franks held out for much of the evening, but after a full night of being lobbied intensely, he took Pence aside and told him he was going to switch.

For Otter, this represents the second time has switched his vote from "no" to "yes" on the prescription drug entitlement. He switched his vote after telling HUMAN EVENTS' John Gizzi that he would vote against the bill.

Also of interest are Republican Congressmen Richard Burr (N.C.), Steve Buyer (Ind.), and James Sensenbrenner (Wis.). All three voted against a similar bill in June, then turned around and voted for this bill, even though it is worse than its earlier version in several respects. Also, Rep. Ernest Istook (R.-Okla.) voted in favor, even though he opposed the bill in June.

Rep. John Culberson (R.-Tex.) changed his vote the opposite way, from "yes" to "no," at the last minute, once the bill's passage was ensured. His staff had no explanation.

On the other hand, in addition to the 16 Republicans who stayed solid throughout, nine GOP lawmakers found their courage in the fall and switched to vote "no" on this final version of the bill. They include Pat Toomey (Pa.) and freshmen Scott Garrett (N.J.), Gresham Barrett (S.C.), and Tom Feeney (Fla.), among others. These freshmen were pushed hardest to change their votes, but refused.

"I came to Washington to reform Great Society programs, not to ratify and enlarge them," said Feeney in a written statement released the same day the vote was taken. Pence told Human Events that Feeney, who stood with him on the House floor throughout the three-hour vote, warded off those pressuring him with the same line: "This isn't about my career?it's about my country."

A Bad Bill

The prescription drug bill, covered extensively by HUMAN EVENTS, represents the most expensive vote-buying measure since President Lyndon Johnson. U.S. Comptroller General David Walker testified before Congress in 2001 that Medicare's liabilities "represent an unsustainable burden on future generations."

Thanks to this added entitlement, the program will bankrupt the treasury even more quickly, all but ensuring a payroll tax-hike on younger workers within 30 years.

This bill is being enacted by the first Republican controlled government since the Eisenhower administration.

Most Democrats opposed the bill, but only because they wanted an even bigger new entitlement. Also, House Democrats did not want President Bush to get credit for the bill among the senior citizen voters who stand to gain.

Below is the tally of the House vote, by party and position. A "yes" vote was a vote for the new, government-expanding entitlement. A "no" vote was a vote against the entitlement.