EXHIBIT 8

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Nick Smith's Press Release - December 4, 2003

Smith Comments on Allegations Surrounding Medicare Vote

(Washington, D.C.) -- "I have received many inquiries about lobbying pressure on the Medicare vote that took place on November 21 and the morning of November 22. I talked to a lot of members and organizations about the bill before and during the vote. I think I made it clear that I opposed the legislation because it was not good fiscal policy.

"I want to make clear that no member of Congress made an offer of financial assistance for my son's campaign in exchange for my vote on the Medicare bill. I was told that my vote could result in interested groups giving substantial and aggressive campaign 'support' and 'endorsements.' No specific reference was made to money.

"Some members said they would work against Brad if I voted no. My son called and said, 'I don't want to go to Congress that way' and 'Do the right thing.'

"The vote was taking place in the middle of the night. People were frustrated and nerves were frayed on all sides. The lobbying effort on behalf of the legislation was intense. Anyone with information can bend my ear, but they can't twist my arm.

"The lobbying from members was intense, but I want to be absolutely clear that I believe no member violated any ethical rule in this episode. I see no need for an ethics investigation, let alone a criminal investigation."