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Johnson rips reckless Medicare bill

Today U.S. Congressman Sam Johnson (3rd Dist.-Texas) released the following statement on H.Res. 1368 - Relating to the House procedures contained in section 803 of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003. The House will vote on the measure later today.

To promote fiscal responsibility and accountability to the Medicare entitlement program, the 2003 Medicare modernization legislation included a provision that would force the President to submit legislation that would reform the Medicare program to contain costs if spending tops a pre-determined limit, i.e. the "trigger". Last April the Medicare trustees revealed that for two years running the Medicare program had to secure just under half of its money needs from the general government revenue because the Medicare trust fund money did not cover the bills.

Today Democrats are bringing legislation to the floor that would remove this "trigger" provision that would have forced a much-needed floor debate on how to ensure Medicare's long-term financial viability. This bill shows that the Democrats are not taking the Trustees' warnings seriously and are willing to delay any actions on this program.

“Every report known to man shows that Medicare’s facing serious financial troubles. The Democrats just have to ‘cowboy-up’ and admit it and work with Republicans to create real solutions that won’t break the bank.

“The Democrats want to remove the one safeguard that tries to keep Medicare spending in check. The Baby Boomers will rely on Medicare for decades to come so we better fix the hemorrhaging now while there’s still time. I wish that the Democrats had the courage to admit that Medicare’s heading for trouble and we have to roll up our sleeves and make hard and tough choices to see this through – for our children and our grandchildren.

“If we really want to fix Medicare, we must slow the growth of the ever-expanding program. The federal government spends more money on Medicare than the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Energy, Homeland Security, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs spend combined.

“Clearly, the Democrats aren’t up to this challenge and have decided to leave this mess for others to deal with.”

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