

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 4, 2004

The Honorable Tommy Thompson
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Thompson:

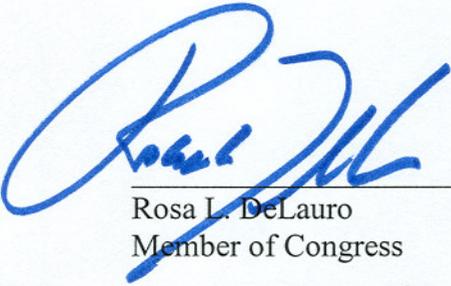
We are writing to express our outrage at the Administration's announcement of a massive taxpayer-funded advertising campaign to promote its Medicare bill. Just one day after presenting a budget that eliminates and cuts critical programs, America's working families are being asked to foot the bill for the Administration's election year advertising.

Yesterday, the White House announced that it will use \$9.5 million from your Department for a television ad campaign to "rebut criticism of the new Medicare law". In addition, \$3.1 million will be used for newspaper, radio and internet ads in both English and Spanish. This new ad campaign raises serious questions about the Administration using taxpayer funds for political purposes. Accordingly, we would like you to provide the following information:

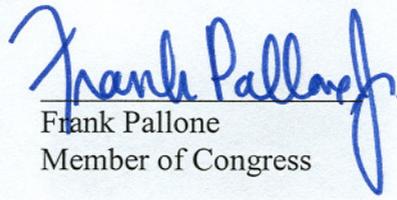
- The rationale for spending taxpayers' funds on this ad campaign. If this is an effort to educate the public about the prescription drug legislation, why does it advocate particular points of view that are clearly controversial and that have already been challenged by senior and consumer organizations as being inaccurate and misleading.
- The total cost in appropriated and non-appropriated Department funds dedicated to this ad campaign. Please identify the specific accounts from which the funds are being drawn, and prepare an additional separate breakdown of the cost associated with the production of each television, print, radio and internet ad, and a separate breakdown of the cost of placing the ads before the public.
- The name of each business involved in producing or placing the ads; how much each is being paid for their work; and whether the contracts were put out for bid.
- The names of the locations in which the ads are being placed.
- An accounting of other instances in which the Department used funds to advocate for a specific program or legislation.
- During a time when we are asked to rein in spending and use taxpayer money wisely, why is it acceptable to spend this money on an ad campaign, particularly when it is discussing a benefit that will not even be implemented until 2006 ?

American families should not have to pay for this sham advertising campaign, especially for partisan political gain. We look forward to your prompt response.

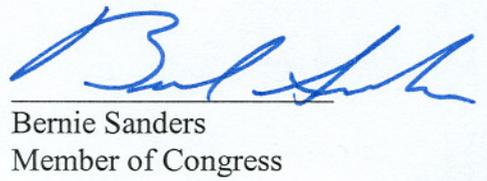
Sincerely,



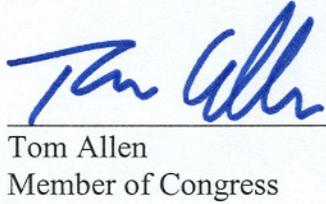
Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



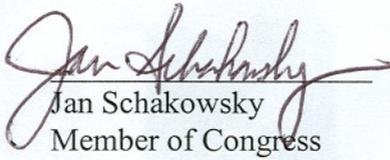
Frank Pallone
Member of Congress



Bernie Sanders
Member of Congress



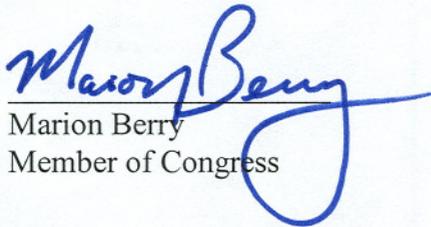
Tom Allen
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Rahm Emanuel
Member of Congress



Marion Berry
Member of Congress