

July 10, 2019

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
Washington, SC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader McCarthy, and Leader Schumer:

As a former members of the Senate Finance Committee who were involved in the passage and implementation of the Medicare Part D program, we are writing to offer support for the long-term viability of the program and discuss our experiences being part of one of the most successful programs in the American health care system.

Medicare Part D is a remarkably popular and sustainable government program. As the program has grown and evolved over the years, participation in Part D has skyrocketed, with more than [43 million](#) of the 60 million American Medicare beneficiaries opting into this prescription drug benefit. Not only is it a well-liked program, but it has proven to be cost-effective, as well. According to the Congressional Budget Office, Part D [costs](#) have come in to be 45% less than the initial projection period of 2004-2013, during the first decade of the program's implementation.

Today we have the luxury of taking the Medicare Part D program for granted. Long forgotten are the stories about seniors relying on Medicare for health care yet having no access to prescription drug coverage. This fact was astonishing, and we knew that something had to be done. Through many legislative battles about how – or even whether – we should create a drug program in Medicare, our priorities were always access and beneficiary protections. We are extremely proud to have voted to create the Part D program in 2003.

Now, more than 15 years later, we can see just how impactful this initiative has been in expanding access to crucial medications for patients in need. The number of beneficiaries satisfied with their Part D coverage remains consistent and [strong](#). Seniors enrolled in Part D enjoy significant choice in plans, including many tailored to specific needs or lifestyles, and Part D premiums remain very affordable.

One of the aspects of the program that makes us most proud is that the original Part D legislation was a true [bipartisan effort](#). Partisanship and politics should not have a place in providing seniors the medical care they need and deserve.

Of course, government programs can always be improved and modernized. Medicare Part D is no different. However, we encourage our former colleagues to keep in mind the spirit behind our original actions, when considering any drastic changes. Maintaining the integrity of the original Part D program is the right thing to do for the millions of beneficiaries who rely on prescription medications every single day.

Part D is an amazing success story, and while nothing is perfect, we need to safeguard Part D from any drastic or short-sighted changes that could undermine its long-term viability. Seniors and individuals with disabilities across the country truly depend on it each and every day and it is our duty to speak out to ensure its continued success. Medicare Part D was a bipartisan effort that passed, not because it was perfect, but because we could not imagine a healthcare program for seniors in the 21st century without a prescription drug component. Efforts to preserve and improve Medicare Part D should also be a bipartisan effort for the same reason.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Blanche L. Lincoln". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Blanche L. Lincoln
Former United States Senator (D-AR)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Max Baucus". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Max Baucus
Former United States Senator (D-MT)