

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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8TH DISTRICT FLORIDA

**SENIORS
UPDATE**

July 31, 2018

Dear Friend,

It's been a busy year in the House of Representatives, and we have had some great accomplishments for senior citizens. I would like to take a moment to share with you some of these legislative victories and other initiatives moving through the Congress.

- ✓ **Simplifying Tax Filing for Senior Citizens** – Everybody knows how complicated filing your taxes can be. However, many senior citizens don't have complicated income streams, and their tax filing forms should reflect that reality. That's why I introduced bipartisan legislation to direct the IRS to create a new 1040SR form, similar to the existing 1040EZ form, to streamline tax filing for seniors who don't have complicated incomes. The common-sense law will help senior citizens 65 years or older save time and money when filing taxes if their incomes include Social Security benefits; distributions from qualified retirement plans, annuities, or other such deferred payment arrangements; interest and dividends; or capital gains and losses. **I'm pleased to report that our plan was passed by Congress and signed into law by the President.** The IRS informs my office that not since 1983 has there been a new simplified form for individual filers.
- ✓ **Protecting the Doctor-Patient Relationship** – The Obamacare health care law established the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB), which is comprised of 15 unelected bureaucrats empowered to decide what Medicare will and will not cover. Over the years I have cosponsored and voted for legislation to repeal the IPAB to protect benefits and to ensure that no Washington bureaucrat stands between a Medicare patient and their doctor. **Congress has finally repealed this harmful program to seniors.**
- ✓ **More Affordable Prescription Drug Coverage** – The rising cost of prescription drugs has forced many senior citizens to make tough choices or forgo essential medications. In 2003 Congress established Medicare Part D to provide coverage to help seniors pay for prescription drugs. The program has a low threshold of coverage, after which the patient pays out of pocket for the drugs. This coverage gap has become known as the "donut hole." Drug coverage kicks back in but only after a certain amount has been paid out of pocket. **Legislation recently passed by Congress and signed into law by the President closes the donut hole so seniors can better afford the drugs they need.**

- ✓ **Protecting Social Security and Medicare** – Social Security and Medicare are contracts between seniors and the federal government, and those promises must be kept. Most senior citizens have planned their retirement based on the assurance of these benefits, and it would be wrong to pull the rug out from under their feet.

In the past, I have cosponsored legislation to ensure that Social Security and Medicare benefits are paid should Washington reach budgetary gridlock, and legislation (H.R. 1205) to provide immediate relief for seniors who see smaller portions of their paid Social Security benefits because they receive earnings such as a pension. I'm committed to advancing ways to safeguard these programs for current and future retirees. **I have cosponsored legislation to protect the most at-risk recipients of Social Security (H.R. 4547), supported legislation to improve Medicare Part B (H.R. 3178) to make dialysis treatments and home care options more accessible for patients, and getting tough on Medicare fraud.**

- ✓ **Improving Alzheimer's Research and Care** – According to a recent report by the Alzheimer's Association, as many as 540,000 Floridians suffer from Alzheimer's disease. I have long supported initiatives to further research and raise awareness for Alzheimer's and care for those currently battling the disease. Earlier this year, I cosponsored the **BOLD Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act** (H.R. 4256), which establishes centers for early detection, risk reduction, and management of Alzheimer's.
- ✓ **Support for Family Caregivers** – I also supported the **RAISE Family Caregivers Act** (H.R. 3759), which directs the Department of Health and Human Services to develop a strategy to recognize and support family caregivers. These caregivers are vital to the well-being of loved ones with dementia and other health challenges, often taking them to the doctor, feeding them, and bathing and clothing them so that they can live at home. Around 40 million Americans offer unpaid care to someone, and this plan seeks to identify policies to support these individuals. **Thankfully, this legislation was enacted into law in January of this year.**
- ✓ **Serving Citizens with Special Needs and Chronic Illness** – Positive changes to Medicare Advantage Plans have been made to help consumers with special needs and chronic illnesses. **Congress permanently reauthorized Medicare Advantage Special Needs Plans so there will no longer be any lapse in coverage for those utilizing the plans.** Special Needs Plans are available for people with specific diseases or characteristics. The plans tailor their benefits, provider choices, and drug formularies to best serve the particular needs of eligible enrollees.

As your representative, I am committed to ensuring our seniors' interests are promoted in Congress. If you know of any senior in our community who is having trouble with Social Security, Medicare, or a federal agency, please encourage them to contact my staff at 321-632-1776. My team and I are here to serve you.

Sincerely,



Bill Posey
Member of Congress