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Congress of the United States
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July 11, 2012

Mr. A. Barry Rand
Chief Executive Officer
AARP
601 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20049

Dear Mr. Rand:

I am writing to urge AARP to publicly support repeal of the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB), which was created by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). Now that the Supreme Court has upheld the constitutionality of the ACA, it is up to Congress to repeal the IPAB before it can deny seniors access to needed medical care.

The IPAB, as you know, is an unelected, unaccountable bureaucracy that was granted sweeping powers to "reduce the per capita rate of growth in Medicare spending." Its proposals will be considered using "fast track" procedures and—absent a three-fifths vote of the Senate—Congress can only modify the type of cuts, not the amount. Should Congress fail to act on the board's recommendations, they automatically go into effect. To make matters worse, the IPAB is exempt from administrative or judicial review.

As a physician with more than 30 years of experience, I have grave concerns that the IPAB will function as a denial-of-care board that will slash Medicare payments just to meet an arbitrary budget. While advocates for the IPAB highlight statutory language that prohibits rationing, this term has never been adequately defined. In addition, the ACA does not prohibit reducing payments to physicians. As Medicare currently pays physicians only 80% of what private insurers do, any additional cuts could severely limit patients' access to care.

Strong bipartisan opposition to the IPAB already exists—my legislation to repeal the IPAB has 234 cosponsors, including 20 Democrats. I am calling on AARP to publicly join our efforts and fight for its members' access to medical care.

I would appreciate the courtesy of a response as to what AARP's intentions are relative to IPAB. If you or your staff has any questions, please contact John Martin of my staff at john.martin@mail.house.gov or (202) 225-6356.

Sincerely,



Phil Roe, M.D.
Member of Congress

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