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DEMOCRATS LAUNCH TASK FORCE TO ADDRESS SENIORS' PRIORITIES

Members Introduce Seniors' Bill of Rights

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the House Democratic Caucus launched a new initiative to reach out to America's seniors and address the issues that matter most to them. The Seniors Task Force, co-chaired by Doris Matsui (CA-05) and Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (IL-09), will work to protect seniors' rights and raise awareness of policies that will improve the health and well-being of America's seniors.

To accomplish that, the Task Force introduced a Seniors' Bill of Rights – legislation that expresses Democratic support for seniors' priorities, particularly in the key areas of:

- Financial and economic security,
- Quality, affordable health care,
- Protection from scams and fraud; and
- Safe and livable communities.

The work of the task force will build on the accomplishments of the Democratic-led Congress on behalf of America's seniors. We've taken steps to protect seniors' retirement savings and stop the financial and credit card fraud that overwhelmingly targeted seniors. We're creating jobs for seniors now that will put our economy on sound footing for future generations. And, our historic health care bill will lower the cost of prescription drugs for seniors by beginning to close the "donut hole." It will mean a stronger and more robust Medicare for years to come, with extended solvency, new measures to coordinate and improve care and a focus on community and home-based care.

Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01), Chairman of the House Democratic Caucus, said, "Part of standing for middle class values is standing with America's seniors. That's why Democrats are on the side of ensuring seniors have access to the health care they need, keeping their retirement savings secure and safe and helping them stay in their homes for as long as possible. We believe that after a lifetime of contributions to our society, seniors have earned the benefits they get. And, by taking care of America's seniors into their old age we are strengthening our nation for everyone. I look forward to working with Congresswoman

Schakowsky, Congresswoman Matsui and all of the members of the task force to advance the needs and rights of America's seniors."

"Democrats have a long and strong record on protecting the rights of America's seniors, and the Seniors' Bill of Rights formalizes that commitment," said Congresswoman Matsui. "Older Americans deserve a dignified, secure and independent retirement. That is the promise that Democrats are making to America's seniors."

Congresswoman Schakowsky said, "The focus of our task force is to shine a light on the needs of American seniors every single day, by ensuring they have affordable, reliable health care; financial security; and a dignified quality of life."

"As a representative of one of the fastest growing senior populations in the country, I look forward to sharing the unique needs of older Americans in my district with the members of the Seniors Task Force," Congresswoman Dina Titus (NV-03), a member of the Seniors Task Force, said. "This working group will enable us to sharpen our focus on policies that will promote the well-being of all seniors. With the task force providing a powerful voice on behalf of American seniors, we will continue to build on our work, such as health care reform that benefits seniors by ending the prescription drug donut hole, extending the life of the Medicare Trust Fund, and lowering costs while improving care."

"Congress has a responsibility to keep its promises to America's seniors," said Congressman Mark Schauer (MI-07), a member of the Seniors Task Force. "The Task Force is dedicated to addressing issues that affect seniors - financial security, affordable and reliable health care, and quality of life. The Seniors Bill of Rights is a great first step in outlining the goals the Task Force will work to accomplish."

The Seniors Task Force already has more than 30 members from the Democratic Caucus and the Seniors' Bill of Rights has 40 original co-sponsors. For more information about the Seniors Task Force, go to <http://www.dems.gov/seniors> .

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