

1 State of Arkansas
2 84th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2003

SCR 4

4
5 By: Senator Faris
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8 **SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

9 REQUESTING THAT THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS ENACT
10 A MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT.

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12 **Subtitle**

13 REQUESTING THAT THE UNITED STATES
14 CONGRESS ENACT A MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION
15 DRUG BENEFIT.
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18 WHEREAS, the use of prescription drugs improves the quality of care and
19 helps patients live healthier, longer, and more productive lives while
20 keeping them out of more costly acute care settings in the long term; and
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22 WHEREAS, the increased use of new and improved prescription drugs has
23 changed the delivery of health care in the United States since Medicare was
24 enacted, and while two-thirds (2/3) of the Medicare population has some form
25 of prescription drug coverage, although for many people that coverage is
26 inadequate, one third (1/3) of Medicare beneficiaries have no coverage at
27 all; and
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29 WHEREAS, Congress did not enact a drug benefit in the Medicare program,
30 leaving the program inadequate in providing the elderly and disabled with the
31 most appropriate drug therapies, and preventing the delivery of high quality
32 health care at an affordable cost; and
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34 WHEREAS, the private sector provides affordable coverage by negotiating
35 discounts on drugs and meeting the needs of special populations with chronic
36 diseases and those with comorbidities through coordinating care with disease



1 management, drug utilization review, and patient education programs, all of
2 which aid in ameliorating medical errors; and

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4 WHEREAS, comprehensive reform of the Medicare program would use the
5 successful tools of the private sector to coordinate care for this population
6 and would use the marketplace to foster competition among private plans,
7 resulting in more choices of high quality coverage for seniors and the
8 disabled while maintaining the financial sustainability of the program; and

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10 WHEREAS, Congress has failed to provide for comprehensive reform of
11 Medicare, encouraging states to use their own resources to ease the burden on
12 their elderly and disabled populations and effectively requiring states to
13 assume an unfunded, informal mandate; and

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15 WHEREAS, in implementing state programs to assist the Medicare
16 population, state budgetary constraints can often result in restrictions and
17 limitations on patient access to needed prescription drugs, coupled with
18 enactment of anti-competitive price controls,

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20 NOW THEREFORE,

21 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE EIGHTY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
22 STATE OF ARKANSAS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:

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24 That the Eighty-Fourth General Assembly of the State of Arkansas
25 requests that the United States House of Representatives and the United
26 States Senate enact financially sustainable, voluntary, universal, and
27 privately administered outpatient prescription drug coverage as part of the
28 federal Medicare program.

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30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon adoption of this resolution, with the
31 House of Representatives concurring therein, the Clerk of the Arkansas Senate
32 shall transmit copies to the presiding officer of the United States Senate
33 and the United States House of Representatives, and to each member of the
34 Arkansas congressional delegation.

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