

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 10

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2003 Regular Session
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By: **Senator Hollinger**

Introduced and read first time: February 12, 2003

Assigned to: Rules

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A Senate Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Medicare - Prescription Drug Benefit**

3 FOR the purpose of requesting the United States House of Representatives and the
4 United States Senate to enact certain legislation providing for certain
5 prescription drug coverage as part of the federal Medicare program; and
6 generally relating to the prescription drug benefits under Medicare.

7 WHEREAS, The use of prescription drugs improves the quality of care and
8 helps patients live healthier, longer, and more productive lives while keeping them
9 out of more costly acute care settings in the long term; and

10 WHEREAS, The increased use of new and improved prescription drugs has
11 changed the delivery of health care in the United States since Medicare was enacted,
12 and while two-thirds of the Medicare population has some form of prescription drug
13 coverage, although at times inadequate, one-third of Medicare beneficiaries have no
14 coverage at all; and

15 WHEREAS, Congress did not enact a drug benefit in the Medicare program,
16 the program is inadequate in providing the elderly and disabled with the most
17 appropriate drug therapies and preventing the delivery of quality health care at an
18 affordable cost; and

19 WHEREAS, The private sector provides affordable coverage by negotiating
20 discounts on drugs and meeting the needs of special populations with chronic diseases
21 and those with co-morbidities through coordinating care with disease management,
22 drug utilization review, and patient education programs, all of which aid in
23 ameliorating medical errors; and

24 WHEREAS, Comprehensive reform of the Medicare program would utilize the
25 successful tools of the private sector to care for this population and use the
26 marketplace to foster competition among private plans, resulting in more choices of
27 quality coverage for seniors and the disabled while maintaining the financial
28 sustainability of the program; and

29 WHEREAS, Inaction by Congress has failed to provide for comprehensive
30 reform of Medicare, encouraging states to use their own resources to ease the burden

1 of their elderly and disabled populations and effectively assume an unfunded,
2 informal mandate; now, therefore, be it

3 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the
4 General Assembly requests that the United States House of Representatives and the
5 United States Senate enact financially sustainable, voluntary, universal, and
6 privately administered outpatient prescription drug coverage as part of the federal
7 Medicare program; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
9 Legislative Services to the Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United States;
10 and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
12 Legislative Services to the Maryland Congressional Delegation: Senators Paul S.
13 Sarbanes and Barbara A. Mikulski, Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510;
14 and Representatives Wayne T. Gilchrest, C. A. Dutch Ruppersberger, III, Benjamin L.
15 Cardin, Albert R. Wynn, Steny Hamilton Hoyer, Roscoe G. Bartlett, Elijah E.
16 Cummings, and Christopher Van Hollen, Jr., House Office Building, Washington,
17 D.C. 20515; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
19 Legislative Services to the Honorable Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor of Maryland;
20 the Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate of Maryland; and
21 the Honorable Michael E. Busch, Speaker of the House of Delegates.