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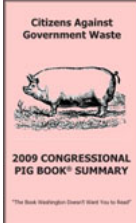
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CCAGW to Congress: \$1 Trillion Estimates for Kennedy Bill Pie-in-the-Sky

(Washington, D.C.) - The Council for Citizens Against Government Waste (CCAGW) today advised lawmakers that the June 15, 2009 Congressional Budget Office (CBO) cost estimates for the Affordable Health Choices Act, Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee Chairman Ted Kennedy's (D-Mass.) healthcare overhaul bill, are woefully underestimated. The committee begins marking up the bill today.

CBO found that for its \$1 trillion dollar price tag over a 10-year period, the Kennedy plan would only insure an additional 16 million people out of the estimated 50 million people who go without health insurance today. The cost is equal to a \$6,250 annual healthcare premium per individual, which is 33 percent higher than the annual average premium of \$4,700 per person for private insurance plans.

"The CBO cost estimate is dangerously low, since critically important information about the bill has been conveniently omitted, including the cost of expanding of Medicare and the size of the government-run plan," said CCAGW Tom Schatz. "In addition, Sen. Kennedy's bill does not address the underlying problems plaguing the healthcare system. It is an attempt by proponents of a single-payer plan to seize control of a huge swath of our economy. It defies logic that Congress and the White House are insisting on creating a government-run plan when Medicare, the largest government-run plan, is about to go bankrupt," added Schatz.

"The cost of the stimulus bill, the bank bailouts, the auto takeover, and the President's budget will nearly double the national debt in the next 10 years. Now they want to pile trillions more debt on top of that for a healthcare plan that will not improve healthcare outcomes or achieve cost-savings without rationing. The CBO report is a grim warning that taxpayers will be overwhelmed by the negative fiscal consequences of a government-run plan," concluded Schatz.

In its first year of operation in 1966, Medicare cost \$3 billion. Congress projected then that the program would cost \$12 billion by 1990; however, it ended up 800 percent greater, at \$107 billion. In 2008, the costs were \$468 billion and the Medicare Trustees estimated in May that the entitlement program is on a glide path to bankruptcy by 2017.

CCAGW is the lobbying arm of Citizens Against Government Waste, the nation's largest nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to eliminating waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement in government.

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