

Hello, douglasgould | [MyNews](#) | [Log out](#) Search[Weather](#)[Traffic](#)
**Mark T. Stuart,
D.M.D.**
Cowards Welcome!
24hr Emergency Service
Open Sat. & Evenings

 300 Hebron Ave.
Glastonbury, CT
860-659-0411

[Home](#) [News](#) [Entertainment](#) [Sports](#) [Business](#) [Local Shopping](#) [Jobs](#) [Cars](#) [Real Estate](#) [Classified](#)
MARKETPLACE

- > [Find a job](#)
- > [Buy a car](#)
- > [Find real estate](#)
- > [Rent an apartment](#)
- > [See Classified ads](#)
- > [Place Classified ad](#)
- > [Go shopping](#)

News

[Columnists](#)
[Connecticut](#)
[Education](#)
[Health](#)
[Latest News](#)
[Lottery](#)
[Nation/World](#)
[Photo/Video Gallery](#)
[Politics](#)
[Special Reports](#)
[Today's Courant](#)
[Towns](#)
[Traffic](#)
[Weather](#)

Entertainment

[Arts & Theater](#)
[Attractions](#)
[Columnists](#)
[Dining](#)
[Events](#)
[Movies](#)
[Music](#)
[TV & Radio](#)

Sports

[Auto Racing](#)
[Baseball](#)
[Basketball](#)
 > [UConn Men](#)
 > [UConn Women](#)
[College Sports](#)
[Columnists](#)
[Golf](#)
[Football](#)
 > [UConn](#)
[High School Sports](#)
[Hockey](#)
[Scores & Stats](#)
[Skiing](#)

Business

[Columnists](#)
[Real Estate](#)
[Technology](#)
[Web 100](#)
[Your Money](#)

Lifestyle

[Books](#)
[Celebrity](#)
[Columnists](#)
[Food](#)
[Home & Garden](#)
[New England Guide](#)
[Northeast Magazine](#)
[Style & Shopping](#)
[Travel](#)

HARTFORD REGION
Larson Lashes Out At Medical Act
■ Medicare Reform Draws His Fire At Public Meeting

January 6, 2004

By ANICA BUTLER, Courant Staff Writer

BLOOMFIELD -- U.S. Rep. John B. Larson railed against the new Medicare Act Monday, in hopes of educating seniors and inflaming them.

In a meeting of about 50 Bloomfield senior citizens and other concerned residents, Larson found a receptive audience while explaining why he voted against the bill.

Larson called the act a "cruel hoax," drawing applause from the audience. Many who attended expressed confusion and fear about the 681-page law, which President Bush signed into law in December.

"The hard truth," Larson said, "[is that] every Western industrialized nation in the world, save for the United States of America, does for its senior citizens what this bill fails to do."

Despite the hype about the law, all but the poorest of seniors remain without a prescription drug benefit. Larson told the audience that the law specifically forbids the secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services from negotiating lower prescription drug prices with pharmaceutical companies, as the Veterans Administration does. Rather than "modernizing" Medicare, as advocates of the law have claimed, the act is a move toward privatizing it, Larson argued.

Keith Bell, whose mother is 90 years old, said he agrees with the congressman. He also said that the AARP, an advocacy group for seniors who supported the reform, sold out senior citizens.

"The bill is awful," Bell said. "Those who understand the provisions, or lack thereof, feel the same way I do. It's really only a benefit for a small amount of people."

As an employee benefits broker, Bell admits that he probably understands the law more than most. But many at the meeting were confused when Judith A. Stein, executive directive of the nonpartisan Center for Medicare Advocacy, went over some of the practical aspects of the act.

As Stein briefly discussed premiums, deductibles and drug formularies, she paused and looked around at a sea of puzzled faces.

"Are you still with me?" she asked the crowd.

The question was met with groans and shrugging shoulders.

"This is not easy to understand," Stein said. "There are too many details and too many devils in those details."

UTILITIES

- [E-mail story](#)
- [Printer-friendly version](#)

ADVERTISERS

January 21 | 2004
Coming
 to the
 Connecticut
 Expo Center
career builder
career fair
 for more information
[click here](#)



Opinion

[Columnists](#)
[Commentary](#)
[Editorials](#)
[Letters](#)
[Other Opinion](#)

Services

[Business Directory](#)
[Find a Person](#)
[Search By Phone #](#)
[Courant Corrections](#)
[Courant Archives](#)
[Courant Photo Reprints](#)
[Courant Permissions](#)
[ctnow.com Media Kit](#)
[Newsletters](#)
[Obituaries](#)
[Reader Representative](#)
[Maps/Directions](#)
[Site Map](#)

But that's why Larson is holding the meetings, he said.

Monday's meeting was the second Larson has held. The first was in Southington in December and drew about 80 seniors, said Michael T. Kirk, Larson's press secretary. Kirk said more meetings will be held around the state in February.

Another reason for the meetings, Larson said, is that the law doesn't take effect until 2006. That's enough time to make changes to the law or even repeal it, if enough seniors express displeasure with its provisions. In a packet of information distributed at the meeting were the addresses and phone numbers of the congressional leadership. Larson urged the meeting's attendees to make their voices heard.

"Give us a few more Democrats in the House of Representatives, and we'll repeal it," he said.

If you want other stories on this topic, search the Archives at ctnow.com/archives.

TMSReprints [Click here for article licensing and reprint options.](#)

[HOME](#) | [NEWS](#) | [ENTERTAINMENT](#) | [SPORTS](#) | [BUSINESS](#)
[SHOPPING](#) | [JOBS](#) | [CARS](#) | [REAL ESTATE](#) | [CLASSIFIED](#)
[Contact Us](#) | [Advertise Online](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#)

ctnow.com is Copyright © 2004 by The Hartford Courant