

Clear 63°
5 Day Forecast



- ▼ **News**
- Top Stories
- Sports
- Weather
- ▶ **CT Publications**
- ▶ **Classifieds**
- ▶ **Place Your Classified Ad**
- ▶ **Subscribe**
- ▶ **Personals**
- ▶ **Entertainment**
- ▶ **Town Talk**
- ▶ **Business Directory**
- ▶ **Sports Wire!**
- ▶ **Fun and Games**
- ▶ **Personal Finance**
- ▶ **Contact Us**



Top Stories

U.S. Rep. John Larson addresses Medicare at senior center

By: John Whitcomb , Staff Writer

09/10/2004

"It is immoral what we do to senior citizens in this country," said U.S. Rep John Larson (D-1st) at a discussion he held on Medicare at the Windsor Locks Senior Center Friday, Sept. 3.

At the event, publicized as a "Medicare Discussion," Brad Plebani from the Center for Medicare Advocacy also spoke.

The event started off lightheartedly with Larson commenting on the Red Sox and quoting an acquaintance as saying, "If you're a Red Sox Fan, you get a straight shot to heaven, because you have already lived through purgatory."

That brought a few laughs from the 20 or so seniors who were present for the discussion.

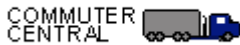
Larson quickly moved into the topic at hand, however, by giving a rundown of the legislation that he says, "masquerades as a drug benefit."

"This bill was defeated at 3 a.m.," Larson said as he began his discussion, referring to the "Medicare Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003."

"The Republican Leadership kept this bill open until the president awoke," Larson continued. "He then made a few phone calls and at 6 a.m., the bill passed."

The bill includes the much publicized "Prescription Drug Benefit Plan" that will take effect in 2006.

"The bill forbids the Secretary of Health and Human Services (Tommy Thompson) from negotiating with the pharmaceutical companies in order to get the best price for seniors," said Larson. "The average savings would be a 62 percent price decrease."



Advertisement

NOW IT REALLY PAYS TO TAKE ACTION.

save up to

\$50 on

your type 2 diabetes medication

CLICK HERE

to find out if you are eligible.



The bill calls for prescription drug benefit cards until it takes effect in 2006. The cards would allow seniors to be able to choose from a variety of plans that have a variety of benefits.

Plebani tried to explain the specifics of the cards, saying that "this was sold because they said it would give consumers a choice. What it gave was confusion."

Plebani then went through some literature he had brought along explaining the differences of each card.

"How do we know which card to get?" asked resident Roger Jones.

"One way to find out the differences is to go to their Web site," said Plebani.

"I don't want a computer," said Will Gould, another resident.

"What we need is one card provided by the government that the Secretary of Health and Human Services negotiates the prices for," said Larson. "We don't want the pharmaceutical companies to make a profit off the backs of the senior citizens."

Larson then said that the benefits the card says it will provide aren't really benefits at all. "The prices are similar to what you can get right now from companies out of Readers Digest or the Web site Prescription Drugs.Com."

"There is also a "doughnut hole to be aware of," said Plebani.

According to the specifics of the bill, the government will help cover 75 percent of the expenses, up to \$2,200 a year. After this amount has been reached, the consumer receives no coverage until they have spent \$3,600 out of pocket. Once this amount has been obtained, the coverage starts up again. This is what is referred to as the doughnut hole.

"How do they expect us to pay for that?" asked one resident.


Larson closed the discussion by saying, "You have a choice to make in November. If you like where our country is heading, keep it the way it is, but if on the issue of prescription drugs you disagree, that is what is great. You get a chance to tell the world."

For more information on the prescription drug plan, you can visit the Center for Medicare Advocacy's Web site at www.medicareadvocacy.org.

©Windsor Locks Journal 2004

Reader Opinions

[Be the first person to voice your opinion on this story!](#)

Back to top 



E-mail this story
to a friend



Voice your opinion
on this story



Questions or comments? E-mail the [editor](#).
[Click here](#) for home delivery of the Windsor Locks Journal.

Copyright © 1995 - 2004 [PowerOne Media, Inc.](#) All Rights Reserved.

[News](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Directory](#) | [Today's Ads](#) | [Connecticut Careers](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [CTCarsAndTrucks.c](#)