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The United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the millions of members and supporters of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, I am writing to express our support for H.R. 6331, the *Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008*. This bill will preserve Medicare beneficiaries' access to their doctors by averting a physician fee cut, and it will provide important beneficiary improvements. We remain disappointed, however, that many of the substantial improvements contained in the *Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act (CHAMP Act, H.R. 3162)* are not advanced by this bill, and we urge you to support negotiations with the Senate that will secure the beneficiary provisions in H.R. 6331 as a first step in enacting improvements that have garnered widespread support.

The *Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008* includes beneficiary improvement and protection provisions that the National Committee supports. This includes a modest increase in payments to physicians, rather than a scheduled cut of 10.6 percent, which will help ensure that Medicare beneficiaries have access to their doctors. In addition, we support the bill's improvements in preventive and mental health benefits; access to needed physical, occupational and speech-language therapy; and improvements in programs that help low-income Medicare beneficiaries with their out-of-pocket health care and prescription drug costs. We are also pleased that H.R. 6331 begins reducing overpayments in the Medicare Advantage (MA) program, which pays private insurance companies an average of 13 to 17 percent more than it would cost traditional Medicare to care for the same beneficiary. In addition, we strongly support provisions in the bill that prohibit many of the abusive marketing practices used to enroll beneficiaries in private Medicare Advantage plans and Part D prescription drug plans.

Although the positive steps in H. R. 6331 fall short of the important strides offered by the *CHAMP Act*, the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare is fully supportive of this legislation. We urge you to vote for H.R. 6331, and we look forward to continuing to work with you to strengthen the Medicare program.

Cordially,

Barbara B. Kennelly
President and CEO