



Congressman Tim Bishop

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BISHOP URGES FIXES TO PRESCRIPTION DRUG BILL

In Letter to Conferees, Congressman Pushes for Medicare + Choice Provision

Washington, DC—In a letter to the House and Senate conferees working on the prescription drug bill, Congressman Tim Bishop (D-Southampton) urged improvements to make the bill acceptable for the 1st Congressional District. Bishop opposed the legislation when it first came up for a vote on June 26.

“I want a prescription drug plan under Medicare for our seniors, but I had to oppose the House bill because it is bad for the 1st Congressional District,” Bishop said. “I urge the conferees to fix this bill so that it will help the people of the 1st Congressional District.”

The bill passed the House of Representatives by just one vote, 216-215. The Senate version, which Bishop believes is a superior bill, passed 76-21. The bill is now in a Conference Committee, where senior members from the House and Senate are reconciling the two bills, and the new bill will then be voted on in each chamber.

Bishop urged the conferees to keep a key provision that will improve the Medicare + Choice reimbursement formula, which would be a tremendous benefit to Long Island’s seniors. Bishop has stressed how much importance he places on this provision, and had called it the only reason he would have supported the otherwise flawed bill.

“I ask that you do everything possible to ensure that the provisions addressing the Medicare + Choice crisis are included in the final version of the bill,” Bishop wrote in the letter to the conferees.

Bishop urged the conferees to address a number of key flaws that directly impact his district. He asked that conferees remove funding decreases to hospitals, which would result in \$12 million in cuts to hospitals in the 1st Congressional District and to include a Senate provision that would restore funding cuts to teaching hospitals that has resulted in a \$4 million loss for Stony Brook. That provision was not in the House bill which passed on June 26.

Bishop also urged the conferees to remove a provision that was in the House bill, which weakens New York’s Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) program. The EPIC program serves an estimated 15,000 seniors in the 1st Congressional District by providing our most vulnerable seniors with a substantial drug benefit. Finally, Bishop urged the conferees to work for Medicare to remain a defined benefit program, rather than a voucher program.

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