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REPORT: MARYLAND TAXPAYERS WOULD SAVE \$366 MILLION ANNUALLY IF THE GOVT. WERE TO NEGOTIATE MEDICARE DRUG PRICES

Senators Cardin and Mikulski Urged To Save \$30B Nationally

Annapolis, MD. – Maryland taxpayers would save \$366 million in prescription drug costs if the federal government were directed to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies over Medicare prescription drug prices, according to a new report released today by the **Institute for America's Future**. Negotiations would save older people in Maryland about \$122 million a year in cheaper drugs and save Maryland taxpayers \$244 million a year by lowering the government costs under Medicare Part D. It is also possible to save Maryland taxpayers another \$59 million in administrative costs by restructuring the prescription drug benefits program.

“Drug prices are too expensive, and the savings from negotiating prices are too great to ignore,” said **Roger Hickey**, co-director of the Institute for America’s Future. “This report estimates the huge costs of letting the drug industry write in this provision that prevents the government from getting the best prices. It is time for Senators to tell us they will fix this expensive mistake. If they don’t vote for change, they are voting for the drug industry lobbyists.”

With more than 85 percent of the country favoring the use of Medicare's collective bargaining power to lower prescription drug prices and with a potential savings of \$30 billion per year, Americans are urging Congress to eliminate a controversial provision in The Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 that prohibits the government from interfering in negotiations between Part D plan participants and drug makers. House Democrats, led by **Speaker Nancy Pelosi**, were joined by several Republicans in passing legislation to remove the provision in January. Now Senate leaders are pushing for a vote on similar legislation next week.

The Change America Now (CAN) Coalition, which was created by the Campaign for America's Future, Americans United For Change and USAction to help push Speaker Pelosi's "100 Hour Agenda" through the U.S. House, is now turning its attention to the U.S. Senate. CAN plans to run grassroots activities in dozens of states, demanding to know what position senators will take on negotiating drug prices.

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NOTE: An electronic copy of the report released today by the Institute for America's Future is available at www.ourfuture.org.*