

DELAURO AND LARSON TO INTRODUCE BILL TO EXEMPT CONNECTICUT FROM MEDICARE PRIVATIZATION PLAN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 3, 2004

DELAURO AND LARSON TO INTRODUCE BILL TO EXEMPT CONNECTICUT FROM MEDICARE PRIVATIZATION PLAN

WASHINGTON, D.C.- U.S. Reps. Rosa L. DeLauro (CT-3) and John B. Larson (CT-1) will introduce legislation today in the House that would exempt Connecticut from having to participate in a Medicare privatization pilot program that was included as part of the new Medicare Reform law. Under the new law, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) can designate six sites around the country as participants in a pilot program to provide health care vouchers for private insurance to eligible Medicare beneficiaries. This privatization testing effort is known as the premium support demonstration project. The legislation would prohibit the Secretary of Health and Human Services from choosing Connecticut as one of the demonstration states.

“This provision in the Medicare law will force seniors into a program that provides vouchers for private insurance companies,” said DeLauro. “I have said it before, and it bears repeating, I did not come to Congress to dismantle Medicare. Connecticut seniors should not be forced to participate in a program that will force them to leave traditional Medicare.”

“This aspect of the new Medicare Reform law is the first step on the road to completely privatizing Medicare,” said Larson. “No state and no senior should be forced to participate in this pilot program, which some hope will eventually lead to the dismantling of Medicare. The Medicare program is intended to be a guarantee of adequate healthcare coverage for seniors and this project would end that guarantee for those unfortunate enough to be affected.”

Senators Dodd and Lieberman have introduced similar legislation in the Senate.

###