

## GRAY PANTHERS POLICY ON IRAQ AND PEACE

**WHEREAS**, the United States domination of world affairs includes use of its overwhelming power or preemptive war rather than complying with international law, and  
**WHEREAS**, the United States attacked Iraq using false information without consultation with other organizations and countries, and  
**WHEREAS**, our government's sanctions, war and occupation have damaged Iraqi infrastructure, such as water, health, electricity, and led to many Iraqi deaths, and  
**WHEREAS**, the United States occupation of Iraq further damaged the stability, peace and prosperity of the country and region, and  
**WHEREAS**, the Iraq war caused many American troop deaths and casualties at enormous taxpayer expense without properly supporting service families, and  
**WHEREAS**, the United States authorizes massive overspending on the military rather than on domestic needs, and  
**WHEREAS**, the Constitution established Congress as the body that declares war and votes for military funds, and  
**WHEREAS**, Gray Panthers strongly opposes all future preemptive wars or invasions that would further the potential for nuclear war and global disaster, and  
**WHEREAS**, Gray Panthers seek to pursue peaceful alternatives to war and reconstruction by strengthening international cooperation and the United Nations, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Gray Panthers ask that Congress and the President bring our troops home without delay, and

**BE IT ALSO RESOLVED**, that Gray Panthers support the United Nations and peace efforts to rebuild Iraq, and

**BE IT ALSO RESOLVED**, that Gray Panthers encourages all concerned citizens to contact their elected officials, write their local press and demonstrate when necessary to demand that this Administration bring our troops home, and

**BE IT ALSO RESOLVED**, that Gray Panthers encourages all concerned citizens to work to elect candidates committed to peace and cuts in military spending.

## *Gray Panthers on Immigration*

Gray Panthers are offended by demagoguery on immigration issues. Valid border security concerns and humanitarian concerns are both swept away when fear, rather than principle, dominates national debate. We will not yield silently to the politics of fear, racism, class warfare and divisiveness. Therefore, Gray Panthers only supports changes in immigration law, policies and practices that:

- Are consistent with human rights as expressed in the United States founding documents and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- Affirm the rights of all persons, whether native born or immigrant, to the protections afforded by the Constitution, including rights to due process of law and rights of equal access to public services and resources;
- Implement humanitarian immigration policies which admit refugees from war, natural disasters and persecution, and which provide for the reunion of family members.
- Are blind as to ethnicity, race, creed and national origin, including especially those policies and practices which determine how immigrants are treated at our borders.
- Require dignified working conditions and a living wage for all workers, regardless of their legal standing, citizenship or temporary residency.

Seventy years ago, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the law that created the Social Security system in the workforce.

Visit our Website for Sacramento and California issues as well as Medicare Part D updates:

[www.gpcal.org](http://www.gpcal.org)

**All members welcome to steering committee meetings held monthly the 4th Tuesday of each month at 1 PM in the Cypress Room at Hart Senior Center, 27th and J Streets in Sacramento.**



## Medicare Part D: Are We Done Yet??

Margie Metzler

The deadline for signing up for Medicare Part D has come and gone, and some people may be asking if we are done with this abominable legislation yet. The answer, of course, is a resounding **NO!** If anything, our work has just started. We as Gray Panthers still want what we deserve: a prescription drug plan that:

- Is simple to navigate
- Offers drugs at negotiated prices
- Won't change your premiums, co-pays, deductibles or formularies at will
- Has your best interests rather than those of insurance companies or big PhRMA as its primary goal

### A lot has happened since May 15:

- The GAO (General Accounting Office), which is a nonpartisan arm of Congress, has released a [major study showing that Medicare prescription drug plans generally provided incomplete and inaccurate information to callers](#) who asked questions about the new benefit. They placed 900 calls and found that *one third of the calls gave inaccurate or incomplete information, 22% of the responses were inaccurate, 29% were incomplete, and no answers were provide to the rest.* Two of the companies gave inaccurate or incomplete information at least 75% of the time.
- [The Bush administration is planning sweeping changes in Medicare payments](#) that could cut payments by 20 percent for many complex treatments and new technologies. A coalition of patient organizations has told the government in a letter that the new system “could have a devastating impact on payment for critical treatments for seriously ill patients, with reimbursement for some essential procedures cut as much as 30 percent.”
- Millions of seniors, many of whom said that the plan was working well for them, [have since hit the Donut Hole](#), a period of time after your drug bills reach \$2250, when you must pay 100% of your prescription costs while still paying premiums, until your out-of-pockets costs reach \$5100.
- [The pharmaceutical industry is beginning to reap a windfall](#) from drugs for poor people. This windfall, which is estimated at as much as \$2 billion or more this year, results from the transfer of millions of low-income people into Medicare Part D. Under the new program, insurers, and eventually the taxpayer, pay much higher prices because of the provision in the bill that Medicare as a whole cannot negotiate for lower prices. We are already seeing sales of certain drugs go up as such as 33%, while prices have increased an average of 3.7% since January of 2006.

- As of this writing, [Over 55 bills have been put forward to make corrective changes](#) to Medicare Part D. Every single one of them is now languishing in committee *because the heads of those committees are not friendly to such changes!*

### So what can we do about all of this?

**First, we must continue to put the pressure on all candidates**, particularly those running for Congress, to support this legislation. And we must refuse to vote for those candidates who still support Medicare Part D. As always, we ask you to write letters to the editor, attend candidates meetings and speak up, and write to your Senators and Congress people.

**Secondly, we are stepping up our postcard campaign**, “PhRMA got the DONUT...we got the hole.” Gray Panthers nationally has distributed over 12,000 postcards, and we will get more out. (Just ask and ye shall receive!) But we have also ordered some smaller cards, cards that perfectly fit a contribution envelope from a candidate, so you can write a note that says something like “We’ll contribute when you take action to fix Medicare Part D.”

**And lastly, we continue to hammer home the message out there.**

**We would love your input as to other places we can use our presentation.**

## Ask Governor to Support AB 1363 to Protect Seniors and Dependent Adults and Reform the Conservatorship System

By Assemblymember Dave Jones (D-Sacramento)

California's Conservatorship system for elderly and dependent adults (originally designed to protect vulnerable adults from fraud and abuse) is broken. The current system allows private conservators to get themselves appointed inappropriately. Some steal or mismanage the money their conservatees spent a lifetime earning.

Most public guardians and probate courts do not have the resources to help. Worst of all, the system provides no place to turn for help. Consider the case of Emmeline Frey. Her private, for-profit conservator hired the conservator's own son, a car salesman, as Ms. Frey's financial advisor. The car salesman squandered \$100,000 of Ms. Frey's estate, but still collected his commissions.

**To fix California's conservatorship system, I authored Assembly Bill 1363.**

First, AB 1363 requires annual court review for all conservatorships. (to Page 4)