



President  
**George J. Kourpias**

Secretary-Treasurer  
**Ruben Burks**

### An Open Letter to Retirees:

I often find myself wondering, “who does our government *really* work for?” I felt this way when I heard that the Bush administration wants to cut \$178 billion from Medicare. This targets the most vulnerable – seniors who need Medicare to afford to see a doctor – in favor of sustaining the record profits enjoyed by big drug and insurance companies. Only in Washington could this be the work of a “compassionate conservative.”

The Bush administration continues to stand by its subsidies to large insurance companies – estimated to be \$150 billion over the next ten years – to operate privatized Medicare Advantage plans, at a cost between 12 and 19 percent higher than if Medicare directly served these same people. And on top of this, the White House says it would veto a bill in Congress to end the ban on Medicare negotiating bulk discounts from drug manufacturers.

The pharmaceutical industry’s main trade group spent over \$22 million on Washington lobbyists in 2007, a 25 percent increase over 2006. At the same time, prescription prices rose eight percent, twice the rate of inflation. The newspaper article I read said the increases were aimed at driving drug prices higher before Congress could pass any Medicare reforms.

What all of these stories have in common is how terribly important 2008 is for us. As these issues are debated throughout the year, we must pay close attention. We must know the issues, and know where the candidates stand.

Our generation’s working days may be over, but our fighting spirit remains as strong as ever. We face great challenges as we try to reform health care and retirement security, but I believe this is a fight we can – and must – win.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George J. Kourpias".

George J. Kourpias  
President  
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