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## **Pelosi Remarks at Rally of Seniors Opposed to Republican Medicare Bill**

*Washington, D.C. -- House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi spoke today at a rally on Capitol Hill held by the Alliance for Retired Americans of hundreds of seniors opposed to the Medicare prescription drug bill. Below are her remarks:*

"Thank you very much, Alliance for Retired Americans! Thank you for standing strong for America's seniors. You have been in the forefront of the debate and have led the fight for a defined, guaranteed affordable Medicare prescription drug benefit.

"Thank you for coming to Washington at this critical time. You are the cavalry coming to storm the Hill for American seniors!

"As House Democratic Leader, I am pleased to be joined by many members of the House Democratic Caucus here. And my promise to you is: Democrats will work day and night against this shameful Republican bill that you have so rightly called 'a lemon.' No more lemons!

"We need to put seniors and disabled Americans first. The Republicans puts HMO's and the pharmaceutical companies first, ahead of your interests.

"We need to reduce costs to seniors. Republicans increase drug costs, prohibiting the government, prohibiting the government from negotiating lower prices. How can it be? The pharmaceuticals made them do it.

"We need to improve benefits for all seniors and disabled Americans. Instead, this Republican hoax leaves most seniors and the disabled worse off than before.

"Republicans have been clear -- they want to kill Medicare. During debate this summer, the Republican Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, Bill Thomas said: 'To those who say that it would end Medicare as we know it, our answer is: we certainly hope so.' Newt Gingrich wanted to see Medicare 'wither on the vine.'

"Now let me just say something about that. Newt Gingrich talked about withering on the vine. And did you know, that Bill Novelli, who is the executive director and CEO of AARP, wrote the forward to Newt Gingrich's book. He wrote the preface to the book. Did you know that? And in that preface he says, the CEO of AARP writing the preface to Newt Gingrich's book, he wrote, 'Newt's ideas are influencing how we at AARP are thinking about our national role in health promotion and disease prevention in our advocating for system change.'

"This has been a long time coming. AARP's leadership has been in the pocket not only of the Republican leadership in the House, but they helped write Newt Gingrich's book on how to destroy Medicare. So take that back to your seniors. Take that back to your seniors.

"Make no mistake, this is not the beginning of a prescription drug benefit for seniors, it is the beginning of the end of Medicare. We cannot let this happen.

"America's seniors deserve better. America's seniors deserve a bill that includes a real affordable prescription drug benefit under Medicare. Republicans are giving you a lemon and it won't make lemonade. This bill is a poison pill.

"Thank you, thank you, thank you for your tireless efforts. Thank you for your commitment to America's seniors! No more lemons, no more lemons!"

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