

Feb 27, 2024

Dear Senator McKay and others concerned re SB0349 and HB0670:

You've no doubt received many variations on a template message about drug benefits for retirees, so I won't use it and I'll keep my message brief. It's about trust and it's truly humanitarian issues. I won't mention money and budget because I could afford higher taxes and I'd much rather see tax increases or other budgetary changes than an addition to the complications in the lives of the tens of thousands of us retirees who would be impacted by the loss of our drug benefits.

These days, in spite of news about the economy, more and more constituents throughout the country are losing trust in government. One good reason is that government often breaks its promises. For whatever reasons, Maryland broke its promise of drug coverage to us retirees, and it even seems to have done so surreptitiously (many of us learned about it only fairly recently). Please restore our trust by strongly supporting this bill and giving us what we were promised.

I came to Maryland to teach at UMBC in 1973. Though I'm officially retired, I remain professionally active, and I believe what I do still contributes to my campus and to the State. But I'd have hoped the State wouldn't have acted to detract from the quality of my life and my wife's. We're both in our late 80's, and it's enough that we've had to worry about COVID and climate and medical issues and so much else these days. There's no assurance that any of the promised measures to ameliorate the change from the State drug plan to Medicare Part D would pass (after all, our trust about State promises being fulfilled has already been violated). If we were your parents or your grandparents would you subject them to the uncertainties of this loss of coverage? My wife and I already lose enough of our remaining time to bureaucracy (how many cumulative hours have we lost waiting on hold to ask a vital question), and we've heard enough from others who've had to navigate Medicare drug plans that I dread the prospect. To the extent I can, I'd like to remain productive without such enormous distractions. I've served the great State for more than half a century, and my wife and I urge you to support this bill and give us the peace of mind of the continued drug benefits that we were promised when we came here.

Thank you for your time and attention,

Sincerely,

A. Charles Catania, Professor Emeritus, UMBC

10545 Rivulet Row, Columbia, MD 21044

Phone: 410-730-6949; cell: 443-745-0945

Email: catania@umbc.edu