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MEMBERS FILE SUIT TO FORCE THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION TO PROVIDE MEDICARE COST ESTIMATES

All 19 minority members of the House Committee on Government Reform, led by Rep. Henry A. Waxman, plan to file suit today in federal court in Los Angeles against the Secretary of Health and Human Services. The members are suing to compel the Bush Administration to release cost estimates prepared by the HHS Office of the Actuary during congressional consideration of Medicare reform legislation in 2003.

“HHS should have released these estimates during congressional consideration of the Medicare bill so that they could have informed the debate,” said Rep. Waxman. “The Administration had no valid reason to withhold the cost estimates then, and it has no reason to withhold them now. The Administration’s continued refusal to release this information has left us no choice but to go to court.”

The Bush Administration improperly withheld its own cost estimates of the Medicare bill from Congress. During congressional consideration of the bill, the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Director of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services stated repeatedly that the bill would cost \$400 billion. They did this in spite of the HHS Chief Actuary’s own analysis that the bill would cost more than \$500 billion.

In March, all 19 minority members of the House Government Reform Committee demanded the cost estimates under the “Seven Member Rule,” a federal statute enacted in 1928 that gives any seven members of the Committee a right to information from the executive branch. The Administration has not provided an adequate response to the demand for information.

The plaintiffs are represented by Los Angeles attorney Marvin E. Krakow and Georgetown University law professor David Vladeck.

Additional information on the suit is available at www.house.gov/reform/min.