



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters and Editors
Re: Medicare bill cost estimates
Da: Friday, March 12, 2004

Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, today made the following comment on whether Congress should have received the administration's cost estimates of the Medicare prescription drug and improvement bill.

"No one should have withheld the CMS actuary's estimate. Every cost estimate is relevant to every debate, this one included, and government analysts with relevant information should never be muzzled. Aside from that issue, Congress wouldn't have been bound by administration estimates anyway. We legislate by the Congressional Budget Office's estimates, and those estimates stayed put. There's a lot of inconsistency in the way Democratic leaders are using administration numbers. They attack the administration for its high job creation estimate, but they embrace an administration estimate to suit the partisan cause of undermining the Medicare bill. That's disingenuous. And don't forget, opponents of the bill that passed wanted a Medicare bill that by anybody's estimate would have cost hundreds of billions of dollars more than what we enacted."