

Medicare
B.

July 22, 1965

Mrs. [redacted]

Pontiac, Michigan

Dear Mrs. [redacted]:

Thank you very much for your letter. Quite some time ago, a very talented young lady working in our office decided to accept an offer of employment elsewhere. Recently, while hunting for some information in the desk she occupied, I came across several letters which she had opened, but had forgotten to give to me --- presumably in the excitement of changing jobs.

Sincerely,

As you probably have guessed, one of those letters was yours. I hope you will forgive this belated reply.

I appreciated very much your letter on medical care for the aged, in which you endorsed the eldercare approach. I am pleased to say that the bill which passed the House --- the product of years of consideration and study --- is a combination of the best features of the original medicare and eldercare bills. The author of the bill, known as the Social Security Amendments Act of 1965, is Congressman Wilbur Mills of Arkansas, the chairman of the prestigious House Committee on Ways and Means.

Congressman Mills is no wide-eyed radical. For years he would not bring to the floor medicare proposals which, he felt, had defects which he could not recommend. However, as you know, he recently combined the newly-introduced program of medicare under social security, to provide basic medical protection for all senior citizens, with the program of eldercare through insurance, to provide additional optional benefits.

Some, advocating the optional approach only, claim that some Americans should be left out of a medical care program altogether. The same argument was used --- and with about as much validity --- in the Thirties when the Social Security Act was first proposed. Some also claim the eldercare-medicare bill is "socialistic". But as we know, the program simply helps Americans pay their medical expenses --- and it says nothing about setting doctors' fees or forcing patients to go to a certain doctor.

In short, I am pleased to say that the Social Security Amendments Act of 1965 is a commendable combination of the best features of both the eldercare and medicare plans. I think both of us will agree that the 313-115 vote by which the bill passed the House represents a landmark in the history of medical care for our senior citizens. I was pleased to be in that overwhelming majority, and was gratified to hear the views expressed in your letter.

Ann Arbor, Michigan

Since this legislation is so complex, and because I know your interest in it, I am sending along a copy of the eldercare-medicare bill as analyzed by the House Committee on Ways and Means. I know it's a lot of reading, but I feel you would appreciate having a fuller explanation than a short note can provide.

Thank you very much for your views. Please let me know your thoughts on other measures before the Congress.

In the excitement of changing jobs.

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Billie S. Farnum

BSFFark

enclosure

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