

Today I was asked to address the entire Republican caucus at the U. S. Capitol on the subject of my recent Medicare Drug Discount Fairs.

Given my very public opposition to the Medicare Prescription Drug Bill, many of my colleagues were quite struck with my willingness to host these forums. I explained my reasons for doing so to the more than 200 House Republicans gathered as follows:

"As many of you know, for deep philosophical reasons, I opposed and continue to oppose the creation of a Prescription Drug Entitlement in Medicare. But I never opposed helping low-income seniors or using the private sector to give seniors access to lower-cost medicines through a discount card.

"With that in mind, I hosted five Medicare Drug Discount Card Fairs across eastern Indiana last week that drew more than 1,000 of my constituents anxious to learn more about the low-income assistance and drug discount card benefits available. And I know we helped relieve the anxieties of many of our seniors who left our sessions much better equipped to consider what benefits might be appropriate for them.

"Even though I opposed the bill, I felt a moral obligation to help seniors unpack the assistance and savings available in the interim program. As our colleagues in the loyal opposition are hosting Medicare town halls designed to create anxiety for seniors, all our members, even those of us who oppose the Medicare entitlement, would do well to go home and talk about the good things available to seniors in this legislation." mrp