

## (May 3, 2006) Congressman Lipinski Addresses Medicare Drug Program

(Mr. LIPINSKI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, in less than 12 days, seniors face a critical deadline. By May 15, they must sign up for a Medicare prescription drug plan. After this date, they will pay a permanent penalty of 1 percent for every month that they wait to join, a penalty they will pay on top of their premium for the rest of their lives.

I have held more than three dozen seminars across my district to help seniors navigate through the overly complex program, and they keep calling asking for more help. They are understandably confused by the more than 60 different choices that they have. The least we can do is give seniors more time to understand their options so that they can make their best choice.

To do this, Congress must pass the Medicare Informed Choice Act which would delay the late enrollment penalty, prevent beneficiaries from losing their employer-based coverage and allow seniors to switch plans if they make a mistake. More than 70 percent of seniors are asking for more time. It is long overdue for Congress to listen and make sure that seniors have a prescription drug plan that works for them.