

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 15—Committee on
Elections, Procedures, and Ethics

FILE NUMBER.....

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION—Urging Congress to provide
a comprehensive plan for the coverage of prescription drugs
within the Medicare program.

WHEREAS, Prescription medications are vital to health care today; and

WHEREAS, Medicare represents a critically important source of health insurance for older residents of Nevada and for residents of Nevada with certain disabilities, and the coverage provided through Medicare does not provide coverage for prescription drugs; and

WHEREAS, Most beneficiaries of Medicare who seek coverage for prescription drugs are required to obtain private or public supplemental coverage to cover prescription drugs; and

WHEREAS, According to the results of a study conducted by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and contained in the AARP Public Policy Issue Brief #IB41, consisting primarily of data collected in 1999 and based on an average of the different levels of income as a percentage of the federally designated level signifying poverty, beneficiaries of Medicare who are 65 years of age or older spent an average of approximately \$2,500 per year, or 19 percent of their income, on out-of-pocket health care expenses; and

WHEREAS, According to the AARP study, prescription drugs constitute the largest component of out-of-pocket spending on health care by beneficiaries of Medicare, averaging approximately 17 percent of the total out-of-pocket spending on health care and accounting for more than the costs of physician care, vision services and medical supplies combined; and

WHEREAS, According to the study, the total spending on prescription drugs in the United States grew by approximately 13 percent per year between 1993 and 2000 and is expected to grow by approximately 12 percent per year through 2011; and

WHEREAS, According to the study, beneficiaries of Medicare made up approximately 15 percent of the population in 1999, but accounted for approximately 40 percent of the total spending on prescription drugs in the United States; and

WHEREAS, According to the study, beneficiaries of Medicare with supplemental coverage for prescription drugs are at risk of losing such coverage, as evidenced by a decrease of coverage of prescription drugs offered by certain employers from 31 percent in 1997 to 24 percent in 2001 and a decrease of coverage offered under certain Medicare plans for prescription drugs from 65 percent in 1999 to 50 percent in 2002; and

WHEREAS, Many older or disabled residents of Nevada who receive Medicare benefits cannot afford supplemental coverage for prescription drugs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY AND SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, JOINTLY, That the members of the 72nd Session of the Nevada Legislature urge Congress to provide a comprehensive universal plan for the uniform coverage of prescription drugs within the Medicare program that will provide beneficiaries of Medicare with stable access to prescription drugs on a voluntary basis, without extraordinary out-of-pocket costs and without unreasonable premiums, deductibles or copayments; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the program of prescription drug coverage for Medicare beneficiaries should have no requirement relating to the use of state funds now used for existing State programs; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly prepare and transmit a copy of this resolution to the Vice President of the United States as the presiding officer of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and each member of the Nevada Congressional Delegation; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this resolution becomes effective upon passage.