

Libertarians say Paul Ryan's Medicare plan fails

By Wes Benedict

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GUEST EDITORIAL

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Libertarian Party Chair Mark Hinkle released the following statement regarding the ongoing debate about the future of Medicare: "Republican Paul Ryan's plan to 'privatize' Medicare is just rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.

"If Congressman Ryan is so worried about the cost of Medicare, maybe he should not have voted for the huge Republican Medicare expansion in 2003.

"The essential problem with Medicare is that it's a coercive program. All Americans are forced to participate in the Medicare scheme, whether or not they think it's good for them. Paul Ryan's plan does nothing to address that essential problem.

"We believe that Medicare should be terminated. The Constitution does not give the federal government any authority to provide or pay for health care, and besides, forcing young people to pay the bills of old people is just plain wrong.

"At the very least, people should be allowed to opt out of Medicare. No one should be forced to pay taxes into a system they dislike and don't want to use.

"Getting the government out of health care will rapidly cut costs and improve quality for Americans of all ages.

"Unfortunately, there is no way to painlessly 'phase out' Medicare. Senior citizens will have to face reduced benefits. No matter what arguments are presented, some senior citizens will feel that they have been cheated.

"Certainly, no matter what path we take, senior citizens are going to get less -- much less -- than they have been promised by the government.

"To the senior citizen who says 'I paid into Medicare, and you can't cut me off!', I would refer you to this comment from the Cato Institute:

Medicare is less a "sacred bond between the generations" than a pyramid scheme allowing each generation to take advantage of the next. Since the elderly are a politically powerful group, each generation has been able to secure larger Medicare subsidies at the expense of young working-age Americans. Medicare has spawned an average of one tax increase every three years for the past 45 years.

"Rather than perpetuating this system, and throwing enormous debt and taxes onto the backs of our children and grandchildren, and frankly ruining their hopes for good medical care, instead let's suffer

the pain now, and end this system now, so that their lives can be brighter, and their health can be stronger."

The Libertarian Party platform says the following about health care:

"We favor restoring and reviving a free market health care system. We recognize the freedom of individuals to determine the level of health insurance they want, the level of health care they want, the care providers they want, the medicines and treatments they will use and all other aspects of their medical care, including end-of-life decisions. People should be free to purchase health insurance across state lines."

The Libertarian Party is America's third-largest political party, founded in 1971. The Libertarian Party states they stand for free markets, civil liberties, and peace.