



AARP Members Leaving Over Health Reform

As many as 60,000 AARP members have left the group in protest over its stance on healthcare reform, CBS News reported on August 17.

Advertising financed by AARP has supported President Obama's reform efforts, and the president himself said at a recent town hall meeting in Portsmouth, New Hampshire: "We have the AARP on board because they know this is a good deal for our seniors." These things didn't sit well with the many AARP members who are upset over proposed cuts to Medicare that will total \$313 billion over ten years.



"I'm extremely disappointed in AARP," declared Elaine Guardiani, a 14-year AARP veteran. Retired nurse Dale Anderson was with AARP for 12 years but now says, "I don't wanna be connected with AARP." These feelings were echoed by other members who attended an August 4 town hall meeting sponsored by AARP. A YouTube video of the meeting shows how much frustration AARP members are experiencing with the group.

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Many former AARP members are defecting to the American Seniors Association, which bills itself as more conservative than AARP and solidly opposes President Obama's healthcare reform proposals. The group signed up more than 5,000 people last week alone, and many of the envelopes from these new members contained AARP cards that had been cut up.

"I think that probably the seniors are most upset with cuts in Medicare," stated ASA President Stuart Barton. While these seniors who have cut their ties to AARP may not severely decrease its membership of 40 million, Barton will gladly welcome those former members to his much smaller association.

AARP has been busy supporting healthcare reform such as the president has proposed while simultaneously denying that it favors any particular bill in Congress. "AARP has not endorsed any plan at this point," said AARP VP for Social Impact Cheryl Matheis. AARP even characterized President Obama's statement about having the group "on board" as "inaccurate." But this hasn't stopped AARP from pushing reform in a broader way, such as through TV commercials that make those who oppose Obama's "reform" look bad.

Guardiani sees through AARP's façade of neutrality toward reform, saying: "I feel they're supporting it through the backdoor, and telling members that they're not through the front door." At this point, enough people agree with Guardiani to join her in walking out. Hopefully they will become part of a surge in awareness that "We the People" need to shut the door on current healthcare reform proposals that will only lead to single-payer, socialized medicine.



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