

Sold Out by AARP, the American Association of Ripped-off Pensioners

Tuesday morning, seniors across America awoke to find that AARP's Executive Director Bill Novelli had sold his soul – and their hopes for an affordable prescription drug benefit – for a little ego gratification. Novelli was quoted in every news story announcing the Republican-sponsored compromise. He even got his picture on page A16 of the *New York Times*.

Bill Novelli's ambition to be a Washington wheeler-dealer had been realized. But at what cost?

By 2006, seniors would pay premiums of \$420 per year, plus an annual deductible of \$275 just to cover 75 percent of their drug costs up to \$2,200. So, out of \$2,200 they might spend on drugs, seniors would end up paying out of pocket \$1,245 – or 56 percent of the tab. AARP's endorsed drug benefit amounts to \$955 per year or \$79.58 per month.

Americans with drug bills over \$2,200 a year would pay an additional \$1,400 before the bill's catastrophic coverage kicked in. So, for seniors who rely on expensive drug treatments to survive, the out of pocket costs would total \$2,645 of the first \$3,600 in prescription drug bills. Again, AARP's endorsed drug benefit amounts to \$955 per year or \$79.58 per month.

And yet, AARP spent \$100,000 for a full-page ad in *The Washington Post* this week defending a bill that Senator Charles E. Schumer (NY) has called “a total sellout to the pharmaceutical industry.” Even AARP's own ad described the bill as “far from perfect.”

Ironically, the newspaper ad ended with a new Bill Novelli inspired logo: AARP – The Power To Make It Better. Tell that to the 35 million members of the American Association of Ripped-off Pensioners.

In fact, go to <http://community.aarp.org/rp-health/start> and tell Bill Novelli what you really think of his slick deal.

Have you heard?

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