

International Association of

BRIDGE, STRUCTURAL, ORNAMENTAL AND REINFORCING IRON WORKERS

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March 7, 2013

The Honorable Patty Murray
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

I urge you to protect the Medicare Part D prescription drug program and the many important benefits it delivers to working Americans. This popular, effective and cost-efficient program must not fall victim to attempts to find an “easy fix” to the very complex budget challenges we face as a nation.

At a time when our nation remains mired in an historic unemployment slump, the biopharmaceutical industry offers one of the job growth success stories. This industry supports 3.2 million jobs in the U.S., many in the unionized construction sector. A recent study estimated that proposed changes to Part D – including the inclusion of forced pharmaceutical rebates to the government -- could eliminate 130,000 to 260,000 jobs. This would come at a time when the construction industry suffers an unemployment rate nearly double the national average.

Union members, in particular, have benefited from the success of Medicare Part D. Many union healthcare plans across the nation have realized significant cost savings through participating in a Part D program. These savings will become even more crucial as the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is implemented and begins imposing taxes on union healthcare plans. Union members who are covered under multi-employer, or Taft-Hartley plans, are already expected to face significant tax increases.

We understand that everyone must do their part to help rein in healthcare costs. That is one of the reasons we proudly supported ACA, advocating its passage and accepting those provisions that required specific sacrifices from our constituencies. We look forward to continuing to work to help ACA succeed, but we ask that you not impose further burdens on an industry – and its unionized workforce – that has already made significant contributions to the new health reform law, to our economy, to public health and to job growth.

Sincerely yours,

Handwritten signature of Walter W. Wise in cursive script.

GENERAL PRESIDENT

WWW/jh