

WALLY HERGER, CALIFORNIA  
SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

SAM JOHNSON, TEXAS  
PAUL RYAN, WISCONSIN  
DEVIN NUNES, CALIFORNIA  
DAVID G. REICHERT, WASHINGTON  
PETER J. ROSKAM, ILLINOIS  
JIM GERLACH, PENNSYLVANIA  
TOM PRICE, GEORGIA  
VERN BUCHANAN, FLORIDA

FORTNEY PETE STARK, CALIFORNIA  
SUBCOMMITTEE RANKING MEMBER

MIKE THOMPSON, CALIFORNIA  
RON KIND, WISCONSIN  
EARL BLUMENAUER, OREGON  
BILL PASCRELL, JR., NEW JERSEY

DAVE CAMP, MICHIGAN, CHAIRMAN  
SANDER M. LEVIN, MICHIGAN, RANKING MEMBER  
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

JENNIFER SAFAVIAN, STAFF DIRECTOR  
DAN ELLING, SUBCOMMITTEE STAFF DIRECTOR

JANICE MAYS, MINORITY CHIEF COUNSEL  
CYBELE BJORKLUND, SUBCOMMITTEE MINORITY STAFF

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

### COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

WASHINGTON, DC 20515

#### SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

June 25, 2012

Mr. A. Barry Rand  
Chief Executive Officer  
AARP  
601 E Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20049

Dear Mr. Rand:

During the health care debate in 2009 and 2010, we engaged in an energetic and detailed discussion regarding AARP's support of legislative proposals cutting Medicare by hundreds of billions of dollars to pay for a new entitlement our country could not afford and many of your members would not benefit from. When pressed about AARP's incongruous position, AARP argued that it was solely representing the interests of its members. However, the Energy and Commerce Committee's recent release of contemporaneous AARP executives' e-mails tells a different story.

For purposes of contrast, we have included the following examples of AARP's public position that appears inconsistent with the actions of AARP's leadership and senior staff.

- “AARP has developed its positions independently based upon what we believe is in the best interest of our members and all people age 50+.” (Letter from Thomas C. Nelson, Chief Operating Officer, AARP to Representatives Herger, Brown-Waite, and Reichert on December 18, 2009)
  - “Our calls against (health care) reform are coming in 14 to 1.” (E-mail from Nora M. Super, Government Relations and Advocacy, AARP to Lauren Aronson, the White House Office of Health Reform on July 24, 2009)
  - “I think we will try to keep a little space between us and the White House on [health proposals]. Our polling shows we are more influential when we are seen as independent, so we want to reinforce that positioning.” (E-mail from John Rother, Executive Vice President, AARP to Ann Widger, the White House Office of Public Engagement on November 6, 2009)
- “Again, AARP has not endorsed any of the pending bills. As for our membership numbers, between July 1 and September 18, less than one-half of 1% of our members have indicated to us that they have dropped their membership due to AARP's efforts on health care reform. Further indicators point to little impact on overall membership...” (Letter from Thomas C. Nelson, Chief Operating Officer, AARP to Representative Reichert on October 1, 2009)
  - “We are getting 1,400 to 1,600 calls per day with the vast majority in opposition. We are also getting a trickle each day of members resigning, which is likely to grow significantly in the weeks ahead. Please keep this information close.” (E-mail from David Sloane, AARP to Lauren Aronson, the White House Office of Health Reform on July 24, 2009)

- “Account cancelations are folks that have quit in disagreement over our positioning on health reform.” (E-mail from David Sloane, AARP to Lauren Aronson, the White House Office of Health Reform on July 29, 2009)
- “We are a strictly nonpartisan organization. We do our work in a very public way.” (A. Barry Rand, Chief Executive Officer, AARP, testimony before the Ways and Means Subcommittees on Health and Oversight, April 1, 2011)
  - “We need Barry Rand to go meet with Ben Nelson personally and just lay it on the line. ‘We will be with you, we will protect you. But if you kill this bill, seniors will not forget.’ We are at 59, we have to have him.” (E-mail from Jim Messina, White House Deputy Chief of Staff to Nancy LeaMond, Executive Vice President, AARP on December 15, 2009)

In light of the newly discovered significant and glaring discrepancy between AARP’s actions and responses to our previous Congressional investigation, which found that AARP stands to see a financial windfall of at least \$1 billion over the next ten years, please provide the following information no later than July 9, 2012:

1. An explanation for AARP’s incongruent public statements and correspondence with White House senior staff and AARP’s political activities;
2. Provide all e-mails, meeting transcripts, or other materials pertaining to, discussing or commenting on House Republican and/or Ways and Means Committee Member inquiries pertaining to the health care debate and law from 2009 through 2011; and
3. Provide all e-mails, meeting transcripts, or other materials pertaining to, discussing, or commenting on AARP membership’s support or opposition to health care proposals under consideration from 2009 to 2010.

Remember, on December 18, 2009, AARP’s then Chief Operating Officer at the time, Thomas Nelson, wrote to us:

*“As is the case throughout our dialogue with you, we are fully committed to being as cooperative as possible in providing requested information.” (emphasis added)*

Thank you in advance for your timely and comprehensive response.

Sincerely,



WALLY HERGER  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Health



DAVID REICHERT  
Member of Congress