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WEDNESDAY, JULY 27, 2005

Bush's Medicare Fiasco: Confusing, Expensive and Failed

by Michael in New York on [7/27/2005 06:09:00 PM](#)

That prescription drug program of Bush's is turning into a real fiasco -- and making Hillary Clinton's plan seem simple in comparison. Here's USA Today's rundown of Bush's pitch to seniors:

Before the morning was out, [senior citizen Myrtle] Anderson heard that some drug discount cards will stay in effect, while others will expire. That seniors who want the drug benefit will have to choose from an array of insurance plans that do not yet exist. That each plan is likely to cover different drugs. That co-payments will start at 25%, rise to 100% and then drop to 5% as seniors' prescription bills mount. That those with low incomes and few assets can get extra help if they fill out a four-page, 16-question application.

Well, now that's cleared up, isn't it? If Myrtle can't understand it, most seniors won't be able to either. The problem is that Bush must get the seniors who don't really need this program to sign up so they can underwrite the seniors who DO need it. But even the seniors who do need it can't figure the darn thing out.

But Vicki DeRuggiero of the US Social Security Administration has a plan.

After her presentation here, **DeRuggiero and a half-dozen state and federal officials worked one-on-one with seniors** to help determine their eligibility and potential benefits. "I've just found that **the personal touch works**," she said.

Great. As long as Bush can send a personal adviser to work directly with each and every one of the tens of millions of seniors who are eligible, I'm sure we'll be able to clear this mess up.

And here's an annoying postscript. USA Today wrote this:

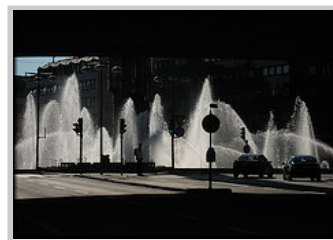
If the costs keep rising — **the original \$400 billion estimate for 2004-13 already has been adjusted to about \$720 billion** for 2006-15 — the program will greatly increase the federal budget deficit.

Uh, no. Does the MSM have the memory of an ADD child? Bush LIED to Congress about the cost of the program in order to get it passed. He stopped the real numbers from being released because it barely made the cut and if Congress had known the real cost (which is certain to rise dramatically), it never would have passed in the first place. It was a lie and created a scandal when it was uncovered. This should have been reported factually as "Bush misled Congress when originally getting the program passed. He told Congress and the American people it was estimated to cost \$400 billion over the first decade when the real cost was dramatically higher -- \$720 billion. Even that figure is now clearly much lower than the real cost."



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