

COMMITMENT[✓]to SENIORS

June 17, 2024

The Honorable Mike Crapo
United States Senate
239 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Crapo:

[Commitment to Seniors](#), an [American Commitment](#) initiative, was established to shed light on AARP's financial conflicts with big insurer-PBMs and their influence over AARP's public policy positions and advocacy. Specifically, I am writing you today ahead of your tele-townhall with AARP Idaho to bring your attention to the enduring and lucrative financial relationship between AARP and UnitedHealth Group (UHG), the largest health insurer-PBM corporation in the nation.

As you know, UnitedHealth Group is a massive conglomerate that owns numerous subsidiary businesses, including PBMs, gross purchasing organizations (GPOs), primary care practices, urgent care facilities, surgical centers, specialty pharmacies, home health services, health IT, health administration, and banking and financial services. By controlling virtually every aspect of the healthcare system, UnitedHealth is able to dominate decision-making and use the system for its own financial advantage, implementing [costly practices at the expense of patients](#) and seniors. These practices include raising prescription "list prices" to increase profits and pocketing prescription savings and rebates meant for patients instead of passing them on, resulting in skyrocketing premiums and out-of-pocket expenses.

Meanwhile, AARP—the self-proclaimed senior advocate—has received an [estimated \\$9 billion in tax-free royalty revenue from UnitedHealth](#) alone since 2007. In 2022 alone, AARP was paid more than [\\$1.1 billion in corporate royalties](#) via UHC, eclipsing what the AARP takes in from seniors in annual membership dues by three times. **To state it plainly, AARP's financial interests are dependent upon UHC, its financial benefactor.**

AARP publicly endorsed and spent over \$60 million to help pass the partisan Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which many critics note redirected more than \$250 billion from Medicare to unrelated spending, including insurance subsidies and electric vehicle credits. A recent American Commitment [poll](#) found that a majority of Americans believe the IRA has not helped them personally in terms of lowering the impact of inflation, consumer costs, and prescription drug prices. Additionally, nearly 75% believe the IRA turned out to be something different than advertised due to politicians prioritizing climate spending and green energy tax breaks over measures to lower consumer prices and healthcare costs.

Meanwhile, AARP has been largely silent on insurer accountability measures important to older Americans, including PBM reforms, premium increases, Medicare overcharges and patient denials, and data breaches.

I thank you for being a champion for seniors and helping lead the charge on addressing PBM reform in Congress. A "seniors advocacy" group like AARP ought to be right next to you on the front lines; instead,

they have been largely silent. It is reasonable to ask whether the potential impact on the bottom line of their big insurer-PBM patron plays a role in their silence.

I urge you to question AARP about its conflict of interest with UnitedHealth Group and how it impacts their policy positions during your upcoming town hall meeting with AARP Idaho. Idaho's seniors deserve transparency and an advocacy organization that prioritizes their needs rather than those of their big insurer-PBM sponsors.

If you'd like to learn more about AARP and how it puts profits over patients, we invite you to visit our website: <https://commitmenttoseniors.org/>. Additionally, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter in more detail with you or a member of your staff whenever feasible.

Sincerely,

Phil Kerpen

President, American Commitment