

Opening Statement
Chairman Frank Pallone, Jr.
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Health
Hearing on “Making Prescription Drugs More Affordable: Legislation to Negotiate a Better Deal
for Americans”
September 25, 2019

Today, we are beginning the process of finally giving the federal government the ability to negotiate lower prescription drug prices for the American people. For years, Americans have been subsidizing prescription drugs for the rest of the world. Americans pay three, four or ten times the amount what people in other countries pay for the exact same drug. That’s not fair, and today we are beginning the process of leveling the playing field by discussing four bills, including bills introduced by Representatives Doggett, Welch and Cummings, who have sought to tackle prescription drug negotiation over the years.

We will also discuss H.R. 3, the Lower Drug Costs Now Act, which I introduced last week with several other Committee Chairs. This legislation gives the Secretary of Health and Human Services the authority and the tools to negotiate the price of prescription drugs for all Americans. It ends the gouging of American consumers by establishing a maximum fair price on what we are willing to pay for prescription drugs, based on what other countries are paying for the same drugs. It incentivizes manufacturers to stop unfair price hikes on Medicare beneficiaries by requiring them to pay a rebate back to Medicare if they increase prices faster than inflation. And it caps out-of-pocket costs in the Medicare prescription drug benefit, giving America’s seniors the peace of mind of knowing that their prescription drug costs will not bankrupt them or empty their retirement accounts.

It is time for Congress to take bold and decisive action to reduce prescription drug prices for all Americans. As President Trump himself said in his State of the Union address this past February, “I am asking Congress to pass legislation that finally takes on the problem of global freeloading and delivers fairness and price transparency for American patients.” That’s the president earlier this year.

I invite my Republican colleagues to work with us on this proposal and remind them that the President recently indicated via twitter that he welcomes our ideas.

Let’s get this done because it is time that we negotiate a better deal for the American people.

Thank you, I yield back.