prices in the world to people who can least afford it, our seniors who do not have any prescription drug coverage on Medicare.

Studies show that seniors in this country pay 72 percent on average more than Canadians. We pay 102 percent more than Mexicans for the same drugs in the same quantity from the same manufacturer. Why do seniors have to choose between food and medicine?

Industry says, blame Canada.

Why do seniors have to cut their pills in half in order to take them?

The industry says, blame Canada.

Why do seniors have to go across the border to buy affordable prescription drugs?

The industry says, blame Canada.

Democrats in the House have two approaches. We have legislation to establish a Medicare prescription drug benefit to cover all seniors on Medicare. We have legislation which I have introduced which would provide a discount for all Medicare beneficiaries in the costs of their prescription drugs. We have legislation from the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BERRY) to make sure that drugs that are sold in Canada can be brought into this country and sold to American seniors at reduced prices. Our seniors continue to suffer from price discrimination. They demand a Medicare prescription drug benefit that is universal, meaningful and affordable but instead of bringing equality to its pricing structure all the drug industry can come up with is Blame Canada, Blame Canada.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SCARBOROUGH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SCARBOROUGH addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ALL CITIZENS OF AMERICA SHOULD HAVE A VOTING REPRESENTATIVE IN THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor to let the House know that a decision has been handed down in a consolidated case, the Adams case and the Alexander case, challenging the denial of full voting rights in the House and the Senate to the residents of the Nation's Capital and full self-government here. In a 2-to-1 decision, the court ruled that because the District is not a State it does not have the privilege that every other American citizen has of having a voting representative.

Mr. Speaker, this decision is on its way to the Supreme Court. I would like to note for the record the courageous lawyers who are appealing this decision, John Ferren, former corporation counsel who was in the case at that time; Charles Miller and Thomas Williamson of Covington and Burling who handled one of the cases pro bono; professor Jamin Raskin, who is responsible for much of the thinking that went into these cases, professor of the American University School of Law; and George LaRoche, who brought a separate case.

Judge Louis Oberdorfer will be remembered by history for his ruling that, indeed, the District of Columbia residents are entitled to voting representation in this House and that the rights involved are not rights of States but of the people who live in the States, that the reference in the Constitution to the States is a term of convenience not meant to deny any American citizen the right to voting representation on this floor.

In going to the courts, District residents signal that there has been a failure of the political process. I remember a failure of the political process when I was a school child in this town. The political process failed and that is why the District of Columbia was among five jurisdictions that went to the Supreme Court and finally got that court to declare that separate but equal was in violation of the Constitution of the United States.

I trust that the failure of the political process here, the failure of the Congress to grant full voting rights to the residents of the District of Columbia, will produce a similarly favorable decision in the Supreme Court of the United States for the residents of the capital city.

Judge Louis Oberdorfer's wise and scholarly opinion raises our hopes that there will not be five justices of the Supreme Court in the 21st century that are willing to sign their names to an opinion that would deny voting rights in the national legislature to any citizen of the United States. One would think that no citizen on the planet would be so denied today.

At the very least, what this body should prepare itself to do now, pending a favorable decision of the Supreme Court or other action, is to restore the vote I won in 1993 for residents of the District of Columbia on the House floor in the Committee of the Whole. It would appear that at the very least, the residents of the District of Columbia, who pay full Federal income taxes the way the residents of other Members do, would be entitled to that respect.

I know that there are Members on the other side, because they have gone with me through the Committee on Rules, who also believe that the taxpaying residents of the District of Columbia should be recognized on this House floor to the maximum extent possible, and certainly that would mean a vote in the Committee of the Whole.

Meanwhile, there is an organization which has been energized to start energizing the country by these decisions. It is called D.C. Vote, and my hat is off to D.C. Vote which is raising consciousness first in the District of Columbia and then intends to raise the consciousness of our country to what we know would not be condoned by the American people and that is that any people that pay taxes in this country would be left without their full representation in the Congress of the United States.

The ball now comes to the floor of this House. The ball comes to those with a political and a moral conscience, to those who serve in this House to make sure that the residents who pay taxes equal to the taxes their residents pay get from this House, from the people's House, the maximum in representation that the people's House can offer.

SENIORS SHOULD NOT HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN FOOD AND PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words about an issue of enormous consequence in my State of Vermont and for people throughout this country, and that is the outrageously high prices that we are forced to pay for prescription drugs. In Vermont, it is not uncommon for many people, including the elderly, to make the impossible choice about whether they buy the food that they need, whether they heat their homes adequately in the winter or whether they have the money to purchase the prescription drugs that their doctors prescribe.

It is not uncommon in that reality that American citizens are forced to cut their dosages in half or take a dose once every other day rather than what they are supposed to take because they simply cannot afford what they need to ease their pain, and in some cases to keep themselves alive, and this is an outrage. This is unacceptable.

Meanwhile, as the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) has just indicated, the pharmaceutical industry remains the most profitable industry in the United States of America. In addition, not only are they raking in the profits, but it is not widely known but true, the pharmaceutical industry receives billions of dollars every year from the taxpayers of this country in order to help them with their research. The pharmaceutical industry receives billions of dollars in tax breaks from the people of this country.

What do we get in return? What we get in return is, by far, not even close, the highest prices for prescription drugs in the entire industrialized world.

Now we have heard a whole lot about Canada, and I will say more about it in a moment, but it is not just that the Canadians are paying substantially less

for the same exact prescription drugs manufactured by American companies. It is every other country on Earth. For every dollar that a senior citizen in this country spends for prescription drugs, the people in Germany pay 71 cents; in Sweden, 68 cents; in the UK, 65 cents; in Canada, 64 cents; in France, 57 cents; and in Italy, for the same exact prescription drugs, 51 cents, half the price.

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Mr. Speaker, during the last year, I took my constituents in the State of Vermont on two occasions over the border, we border on Canada, up to Montreal in order to enable some of them to purchase the prescription drugs they desperately need for substantially lower prices. At the end of the day, when those folks came back, many seniors, many women, they had each saved hundreds of dollar on their prescription drug bills.

One of the more outrageous examples of the disparity in prices deals with one particular drug called Tamoxifen. Tamoxifen is a widely prescribed drug to deal with the epidemic of breast cancer that tens of thousands of women throughout this country are fighting, are struggling for their lives.

In Canada, the cost of Tamoxifen is $34. In the United States, it is $241, same product, same dosage. In other words, we are paying roughly 10 times more for a drug that keeps women alive than are the people of Canada. Let us be clear that the pharmaceutical industry is not losing money when they sell their product in Canada or in Mexico and any place else in the world. They are simply ripping off the American people.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate but true that, if one looks at the record, one will find that the vast majority of Members of Congress receive campaign contributions from the pharmaceutical industry. In fact, the pharmaceutical industry spends more money on campaign contributions and lobbying than any other industry in this world.

Well, it seems to me that the time has long passed for the Members of this Congress to give back their campaign contributions to the pharmaceutical industry, to tell the lobbyists, not only here in Washington, but back in the State capitol, to all over America, to go home, to leave us alone.

It is high time that Members of Congress did the right thing, started looking out for the interests of their constituents, their seniors. They are chronically ill, and demand it of the pharmaceutical industry that the people of this country no longer be treated as second-class citizens, that we deserve the same prices as do the Canadians, the Mexicans, and people throughout this world.

Now, in that light, I have introduced legislation. The gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) has a very good piece in our legislation, which is also introduced by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BERRY) and the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. EMERSON). This is a very simple piece of legislation.

It says that the prescription drug distributors in this country and the pharmacists in this country can purchase the same exact FDA safety-approved product in Canada, in Mexico, at the same prices that the Canadian and Mexican pharmacists pay for their product, and they will be able to resell their product in this country for substantially lower prices.

Let us stand up to the pharmaceutical industry. Let us protect the American consumer, and let us start passing some real legislation to protect our people.

REGROWING RURAL AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, agricultural producers across South Dakota and across this country have been devastated by inclement weather, low prices, lack of competition, and unfair foreign trade. These are all issues which we need to address.

I want to commend the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST), chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture, for holding a series of hearings across this country to examine the farm economy and to hear from producers what we might be able to do to strengthen farm policy in this country. We have just one of those such hearings scheduled in South Dakota for May 2.

This is a complex problem, and there are no easy answers. There is no silver bullet solution. But our producers, all they are asking for is a fair price for their products. They work hard, they work the land, and many times are subject to circumstances which are beyond their control. We cannot control the Asian economy. We cannot control exchange rates. We obviously cannot control the weather. But there are things that we can control.

This year we are finally passing crop insurance reform. It is in conference right now. Last year we were able to pass mandatory price reporting to assist our livestock producers. We have provided emergency income assistance in each of the 3 years that I have been in the Congress. We have extended the ethanol tax incentive to assist our producers and try and stimulate value-added operations.

There are other things that need to be done as well, Mr. Speaker. We need to open markets. We need to pass trade with China. We need to step up our efforts at conservation, expanding the CRP and WRP programs. We need to eliminate the death tax so that our family farmers and ranchers can pass on their operations to the next generation. We also need relief from repressive regulations, and we need to allow for the deductibility of health insurance premiums for our family farmers and ranchers.

But there is one other issue, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to address today, and that is this whole issue of value added, the need of producers to reach up the agricultural marketing chain and capture the profits that are generated from processing the raw commodities.

Producers have great interest in pulling together to do just that, but there are a couple of important barriers. The first is technical expertise and the second is capital. Most of our producers are currently cash strapped.

Now, in response to the need, producers' need and desire to become engaged in these types of ventures, we are introducing two pieces of legislation. The first is H.R. 3513, the Value-Added Agriculture Development Act, which would grant $50 million to create Agricultural Innovation Centers for 3 years on a demonstration basis. The Ag innovation Centers would provide separately needed technical assistance, expertise in engineering, business, research, legal services, to assist producers in forming producer-owned, value-added endeavors.

The companion bill, the Value-Added Agriculture Tax Credit Act, would create a tax credit program for farmers and ranchers to provide a jump start to value-added agriculture by allowing them to get a tax credit for making an investment in those types of operations. Specifically, the bill would make available a 50 percent tax credit for farmers who invest in a producer-owned value-added enterprise. Producers could apply the tax credit over 20 subsequent years or transfer the tax credit to allow for the cyclical nature of farm incomes.

Mr. Speaker, combined into a single package, these two initiatives will provide American family farmers the tools that they need, desperately need to successfully become vertical integrators, and to transform themselves from price takers to price makers.

This is a common sense approach to the problems that plague our agricultural economy, which are many. This is part of a solution.

But I hope that we can generate interest in this body in moving legislation that would provide the types of incentives that are necessary to tear down the barriers to value-added operations that will allow our producers to add value at the point of production and to maximize their profit and help restore some level of profitability and some level of survival to the agriculture economy in this country.

Mr. Speaker, let me just add one last thing, and that is this, this does not just affect producers. What is happening in the agricultural economy is destroying our rural way of life, our rural main streets, those who depend for jobs on the agricultural economy of this country. We are seeing it day in and day out across my State of South Dakota and across this entire country.