

close the legal loopholes that make it so easy for criminals to buy guns and so difficult for law enforcement agencies to keep us safe.

Mr. Speaker, this is a bill that can work. This is a bill that has bipartisan support. This is a bill that can save lives, especially those of our police officers.

BRING DOWN AMERICA'S DRUG PRICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCCAUL of Texas). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise again tonight to talk about prescription drugs, and more importantly about what Americans pay for prescription drugs compared to consumers in other industrialized countries.

I have this chart, and I know that on television it is a little hard for the Members who are watching their offices to see these numbers, but if you go to my Web site at gil.house.gov, you can see this chart and other comparisons that we have, not only with the United States and Germany, as this chart is, but with other countries, because we now have pharmacists literally around the world who regularly share with us what their prices are for prescription drugs.

What you see here are 10 of the most commonly prescribed drugs in the United States. You can buy those drugs in Frankfurt, Germany for \$455.57. Those same 10 drugs here in the United States are \$1,040.04. Americans pay 128 percent more for the same drugs made in the same plants under the same FDA approval.

Let me give you one example we have talked about before: Zocor, an excellent drug. Many heart patients take Zocor. As a matter of fact, some of our colleagues here in Congress take Zocor. And depending on what Federal program you are under, you can be paying a copay of \$30 for that drug. Federal Members of Congress may be paying \$30 when consumers in Germany can walk into the Metropolitan Pharmacy in Frankfurt, Germany, and they can buy that drug for \$23.80.

The copay here in the United States, in many cases, is \$30. The regular price in Rochester, Minnesota, for that drug, \$85.39. And again, these are the same drugs, made in the same plants with the same FDA approval. What is wrong with this picture?

Well, what is wrong with this picture is that American consumers are held hostage. In countries like Germany, they have what is called parallel trade. So a pharmacist in Frankfurt, for example, if they want to buy that Zocor, if they can buy that Zocor in Sweden cheaper than they can buy it from the distributors in Germany, they are allowed to do that.

That creates a competitive marketplace. That is what we are trying to en-

courage with the Pharmaceutical Market Access Act. Now, our Founders understood that the Federal Government is created by the States and not the other way around.

But the States in many cases have been referred to as the laboratory of democracy. And the interesting thing is State governments, and more importantly the Governors of those States, are not standing by idly.

What they are doing is they are creating their own programs. In Illinois, in Kansas, in my own State of Minnesota, Minnesotans now have access to buying drugs from Canada, and they recently added Great Britain.

The I-SaveRx program, now in Illinois, includes Canada, the United Kingdom, and Ireland. Now, many of the people here in Washington, our own FDA says that is not safe. Well, some of these States have now over a year of experience and they have demonstrated that this can be done safely.

The list goes on. Missouri, Nevada, I think was just signed into law either yesterday or today, the law takes effect July 1st, so that people in Nevada will have access to drugs from foreign countries at much more competitive prices. New Hampshire, North Dakota has joined the list. We now have 11 States, and we do not know how many cities have joined this list.

But it really is time for us at the Federal level to do our job to make sure that Americans have access to world-class drugs at world-market prices. Mr. Speaker, this is not a mystery. It can be done. What we know is that the Europeans are not intrinsically smarter than we are.

If they figured out how to do this parallel trade, we can do it as well. Mr. Speaker, it is time for Americans to have access to these drugs at 128 percent cheaper than they can buy them in the United States.

BEST GOVERNMENT MONEY CAN BUY

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, we often hear that the American people have a negative opinion of the job we do here in Congress. In fact, recent polling indicates that 53 percent of the country disapproves of the way Congress handles its job.

In a recent CNN poll, 71 percent of the American people said Congress fails to share their priorities and values. Some around here may wonder why that is. Could it be because while American families struggle to pay their education bills, their medical bills, save for their retirement, this Congress has come to be handing out special favors, and that is all they see of this Congress?

Could it be because ours has become a government of the special interests, for the special interests? Mr. Speaker,

when your gavel comes down, it is to open the people's House, not the auction house. What have the American people seen of late?

They have seen that when we had a tax bill problem of \$4 billion on the corporate side, we were trying to fix a \$4 billion problem, it ended up costing the taxpayers \$150 billion in special interest favors. Only in this Congress, only in this country could you stick the taxpayers with a \$150 billion bill to bail out corporate interests, when you were trying to fix only a \$4 billion problem.

And rather than creating jobs as the bill was intended, it is creatively named the Jobs Creation Bill, it was nothing more than a multi-billion dollar giveaway to special interests. Or consider last year's prescription drug bill for Medicare.

It is about an \$800 billion handout to the prescription drug industry after having been one of the largest contributors to the campaign committee, both for Democrats and Republicans; and it actually ended up with producing an additional \$153 billion in profits for the pharmaceutical industry.

While we were working on that legislation, a Member of this body was actually negotiating a job to go to work for that industry and represent it. Or now that we are talking about the energy bill, we are talking about a \$14 billion taxpayer giveaway to the energy industry, and oil is now being charged at \$59 a barrel.

If it is not profitable at \$59 a barrel, what more do we have to give them? Neither does it ever reduce our dependence on foreign oil. And the pundits here in Washington wonder why the American people out in the country do not like their Congress?

But it is not just the administration and their congressional allies that have worked to craft legislation benefiting a single industry. In some cases the special interests actually sit at the table drafting the legislation that impacts them.

For instance, recently we were all shocked to learn that Philip Cooney, the former chief of staff for the White House counsel on environmental quality and a former lobbyist at the American Petroleum Institute, consistently changed government reports on global warming.

After leaving the White House, and having been discovered having literally changed government reports on the impacts of global warming, where does he end up with a job? Exxon, a company opposed to any legislation on global warming. Then there is the tobacco lawsuit. The U.S. Government won its case handily against Big Tobacco; but rather than seeking the maximum penalty of \$130 billion, the government suddenly decided to only ask for \$10 billion where Philip Morris' attorney said they were very surprised at this decision.

Nobody seems to know how the decision was made, but in the past weeks it