

SUPPORT SENIORS AND THOSE ON MEDICARE BY LOWERING THE COST OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

(Mrs. AXNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. AXNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today and call on Congress to support our seniors and those on Medicare by lowering the cost of prescription drugs.

Seniors will get a 1.6 percent cost-of-living increase this year, yet the cost of prescription drugs is expected to go up 3.8 percent.

How can older Americans on a fixed income afford this? The answer is they can't, and they need to act on this.

I have spoken with Iowans who are rationing their medications or skipping meals just to cover the cost of the drugs they take.

I heard from Joan in west Des Moines, who has an autoimmune disease, and her medication suddenly skyrocketed. If she doesn't take it, she will need a liver transplant, and she doesn't know how she is going to afford the medication.

John in Madrid discovered his standard refill of insulin costs more than, literally, the price of gold.

So something must change. Older Americans need Congress to act.

That is why I am supporting H.R. 3 to protect our seniors. It means our older Americans won't be robbed of their retirement savings and they will live healthier lives.

If you want to give seniors a healthier, happier, safer retirement, then I call on you to support this bill.

HONORING SERGEANT KORT PLANTENBERG; CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 JAMES ROGERS, JR.; AND CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 CHARLES NORD

(Mr. PHILLIPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PHILLIPS. Mr. Speaker, last week, my State and our country lost three young and remarkable servicemembers in a tragic helicopter crash outside of St. Cloud, Minnesota.

Sergeant Kort Plantenberg; Chief Warrant Officer 2 James Rogers, Jr.; and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Charles Nord each served our country with valor and leave behind grieving families and friends and heartbroken communities.

I recently flew with a crew from St. Cloud, and I lost my own father in a helicopter crash in the Vietnam war back in 1969, so my heart is particularly heavy today for Kaley Nord, 2-year-old Lydia, and her soon-to-be-born sibling, who will grow up without a father.

But we will never forget, and we will carry their legacies forward in the spirit of service, duty, and above all else, sacrifice.

May their memories be for a blessing.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICES ARE OUT OF CONTROL

(Mr. CASTEN of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CASTEN of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, prescription drug prices are out of control. Year after year, we see prices rise. Old drugs become unaffordable, and new drugs may cost more than a house.

That is why I support H.R. 3, the Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act. This bill would change the lives of the 89,000 seniors on part D in my district and over 600,000 people on private health insurance plans in my district.

One of those, in particular, is Liz Phelan. Liz lives in Algonquin, Illinois, and retired after 38 years of public service. In 2007, she had a double transplant: a kidney and a pancreas. She is alive today for two reasons: One is the generosity of a donor, and, the second, the antirejection drugs that she has to take to keep her alive.

Those drugs alone cost \$662 every 3 months, out of pocket, but because she needs additional medication, she hits the Medicare coverage gap, where she is on the hook for the balance of her costs.

H.R. 3 would be a game changer for Liz. It would lower her prescription drug costs to \$2,000 because H.R. 3 would create, for the first time, a cap on how much seniors need to pay out of pocket in Medicare. It would make sure that the drugs she needs to survive do not increase above the rate of inflation.

For Liz and for the millions of other Americans who face high-priced medicines, we must pass H.R. 3.

REDUCE OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS FOR PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

(Ms. UNDERWOOD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, today is a historic day for patients in this country because today we will be voting for a piece of legislation that my community in northern Illinois wants urgently. It cannot wait.

I hear about unfortunate and unaffordably high drug prices every time I am home. Recently, a 15-year-old boy in my district who relies on insulin wrote to me: "I am concerned with what my future holds. I need this medicine to live, and if the costs continue to rise . . . I am afraid that, one day, I won't be able to get the medicine and I will die."

No one should be thinking about the possibility of death because they can't afford a common, live-saving medication, and the Lower Drug Costs Now Act delivers the reforms we critically need because the bill reduces out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs; it creates a new, \$2,000 out-of-pocket limit for seniors; and it allows the Sec-

retary of Health and Human Services to negotiate a fair price for the highest cost drugs, which will reduce private insurance premiums and out-of-pocket costs.

This legislation also incorporates my bill to prevent drug companies from making outrageous, unfair price hikes. And with the savings from lower drug costs, we reinvest in Medicare, expanding much needed hearing, dental, and vision services to seniors.

I am proud of this bill. It is a product of countless hours of research and negotiation. I would like to thank the committee chairs, leadership members, and staff who made it possible.

PUT THE NEEDS OF AMERICANS ABOVE THE GREED OF THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

(Mr. TAKANO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, Americans are skipping their medications because the cost of prescription drugs is too expensive. This is immoral.

Americans are going into debt because the cost of prescription drugs is too high. This is immoral.

Americans often pay four times more for the same drugs as those in foreign countries. This is immoral.

This is why I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3, the Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act, legislation that will lower the cost of prescription drugs for millions of Americans and benefit nearly 500,000 people in my district.

No one in America should have to ration their medicine. No one in America should have to travel to another country because the medication they need is too unaffordable here.

We have a moral obligation to put the needs of American people above the greed of the pharmaceutical industry.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote in support of this critical piece of legislation.

ALLOW DIRECT NEGOTIATION OF PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICES BY MEDICARE

(Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I have long called for Congress to take meaningful action to lower prescription drug costs by allowing the direct negotiation of prescription drug prices by Medicare.

I am proud to cosponsor H.R. 3, the Lower Drug Costs Now Act, and I am pleased to see it includes my legislation, the Respond Now Act, as the basis for much needed funding to combat the opioid epidemic.

H.R. 3 provides \$10 billion in direct funding, including investments directly into our communities who are the front lines of this epidemic.