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House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority leader, the minority leader or the minority whip limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) for 5 minutes.

MONEY: THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY'S MIRACLE DRUG

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, PhRMA, the lobbying shop for America's drug companies, has a problematical condition. It is suffering from that most debilitating of special interest deficiencies: sickly message. PhRMA has to come in with a straight face and tell public officials: if you support efforts to lower the cost of prescription drugs, we will not have the resources to develop the next generation of miracle medicines.

Now, anyone who knows even a little about the drug industry knows that that argument does not hold water. We know that with profit margins consistently pushing 20 percent, the drug companies are the most profitable industry in America for 20 years running. They have the lowest tax rate in America. Half of all the drugs developed in this country, half of all the research and development for drugs in this country is done by taxpayers. But without a shot in the arm, PhRMA, the drug industry's lobbying arm, PhRMA's case of anemic message might result in an acute loss of profits.

Fortunately for the drug industry, it has found a miracle cure of its own, a

very effective drug called money, and they are using it to change the way America thinks. Here in Washington you see the drug companies' money everywhere. They spend untold millions on high-priced inside-the-Beltway lawyers to tell the administration and Congress that State initiatives to control drug costs violate the law by putting Medicaid beneficiaries at risk.

And they spend big money, really big money to sell this message to Congress and the White House. The drug companies spent over \$70 million lobbying House and Senate Members during the last election cycle. They spent almost \$90 million on political campaign ads. They know where their bread is buttered. They know who their friends are. Almost 90 percent of their campaign spending was on behalf of Republicans. And they were especially generous to President Bush in his 2000 race and already for his 2004 race.

And by any standard, the money that drug companies have spent on Republicans is well spent. Rather than use its influence to bring down prices in the United States, the Bush administration, infused with all kinds of drug industry campaign dollars, is using its power to prevent Americans from purchasing the same medicine in Canada for one-half, one-third, and one-fourth the price. The Medicare prescription drug bill passed last year by the Republican-led House does nothing to curb the ever-escalating price of drugs. In fact, the Republican bill throws more money, more government dollars, more taxpayer funds at the drug companies.

For the 1¼ million people in my State of Ohio without health insurance, and for the tens of millions throughout this country, the problem is not whether the giant multinational drug companies will be able to afford to develop another version of Viagra or another "Me Too" drug. For working Ohio families and seniors struggling to make ends meet, the problem is they

cannot afford the drugs that are available today.

In Ohio, as in other parts of the country, seniors have grown tired of waiting for the Federal Government to address the high price of prescription drugs. They know they cannot count on President Bush, who receives millions of drug company dollars. They know they cannot count on the Republican leadership. The Ohio Coalition for Affordable Drugs wants to let the citizens of Ohio decide for themselves; and PhRMA, the drug industry's lobbying arm, is pulling out all the stops to block their plan.

Millions of Ohioans would benefit from this plan. Savings are estimated as high as 50 percent. That is why PhRMA is working so hard to make sure the proposal never makes it to the ballot in Ohio. PhRMA sued over the language of the proposal. After that failed to stop the initiative, they challenged petitions trying to get people's signatures disqualified because they had moved or because they have not voted for a couple of years.

But the complete absence of a valid argument has never slowed the drug industry's friends down. No, PhRMA marches relentlessly on in its efforts to derail the Ohio prescription drug savings issue. PhRMA plans to spend \$16 million, more than the total amount of money spent on the Governor's race last year in Ohio. The drug industry plans to spend \$16 million to keep the issue off the ballot; and if it gets on the ballot, millions of dollars to defeat it. That is money they did not spend researching medical breakthroughs. It is money they are not spending helping families afford the latest generation in miracle drugs.

No, the drug industry is spending that \$16 million to delay and to deny the citizens of Ohio an opportunity to exercise their right to vote on whether prescription drug prices should come down. PhRMA is not engaging in a debate or arguing against the merits of

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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