

they seldom mention that the government and foundations do literally half of all their research and development that leads to new drugs. Families USA found that in 2001 the nine drug companies selling the most drugs to American seniors spent more money, in fact spent more than twice as much money on marketing and on administration than they did on research and development.

The Republican majority would like us to accept a Medicare drug plan that is administered by profit-driven insurance companies, profit-driven HMOs who will negotiate with profit-driven drug companies on behalf of our most vulnerable populations. It is not hard to see who is going to lose out in those negotiations, Mr. Speaker.

This Republican plan will not guarantee seniors access to fair-priced drugs, it will not guarantee seniors access to health care, but you can bet the Republican plan will guarantee sustained double-digit profit margins for the Nation's drug companies. Responding to the public outrage at astronomical drug prices, the brand-name drug industry says not to worry, prescription drugs actually save money by reducing health care costs. That is true if prescription drugs were more reasonably priced, but under the Republican bill they will not be. There is no doubt prescription medicines reduce disability and can prevent illnesses which helps alleviate the need for other health care services. Unfortunately, though, Mr. Speaker, prescription drugs are priced so outrageously high that the costs associated with their increased use far outstrips any offsetting savings that might accrue. They are so high priced that millions of seniors and other Americans simply cannot afford them. The choice too often is between heat and their prescription drugs in winter. The choice too often is between food and prescription drugs. Even a miracle cure is worthless if people who need it cannot afford it.

Skyrocketing drug costs are jeopardizing employer-sponsored health insurance, undercutting the financial security of seniors and absorbing an enormous and increasing share of limited Federal and State tax revenues devoted to health care. Something has to give.

The reason the drug industry has spent millions of dollars lobbying for the Republican Medicare bill is because the industry knows that scattering seniors into multiple private plans undercuts the purchasing power that Medicare would provide. They know that squashing efforts to consolidate the purchasing power put 40 million seniors into one purchasing pool to save money. They know that mixing them up into smaller numbers in a multitude of plans enables the drug companies to sustain outrageous drug prices. That is why the drug companies lobbied so hard for the Republican prescription drug plan.

The government negotiates price on everything else. When the Architect of

the Capitol bought the carpet for this room, he did not take the manufacturer's word that a fair price would impair his fiber research. When the National Park Service buys park rangers' uniforms, he does not take the first bid that comes in.

But not with prescription drugs. On prescription drugs, Republicans insist that the government take whatever price the drugmakers want to charge. If you want to talk about an incentive, that is an incentive. It is an incentive to turn the screws on American businesses who cannot afford the price of prescription drugs in their health plans, to turn the screws on American families and seniors who cannot afford the price of prescription drugs, and to turn the screws on government because taxpayers cannot afford the outrageous cost of these prescription drugs.

I do not lose sleep, Mr. Speaker, over sustaining double-digit profit margins for the drug industry. I am concerned, however, at the millions of Americans who are shouldering the burden for these double-digit profit margins at the expense of their health. The average Medicare beneficiary earns \$14,000 a year. Many of the prescription drugs seniors use cost about \$100 per prescription per month. Mr. Speaker, the Republican plan written by the drug companies does not make sense for American seniors. I ask my colleagues to vote for the Dingell-Rangel substitute which will provide drug coverage and will ratchet down prices so Americans no longer pay higher prices than any other country in the world for prescription drugs that are manufactured right here in the United States.

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

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to utilize the time of the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN)?

There was no objection.

TRIBUTE TO THE KANSAS WHEAT HARVEST

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

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, in Kansas today the combines and har-

vest crews are rolling through day 13 of the 2003 wheat harvest. Farm trucks and semi-trailers crowd the highways and gravel roads bringing Kansas's most celebrated crop from the fields to the grain bins and local elevators.

After a few days of rain, harvest is now in full throttle in the southern half of the largest wheat producing State. And with just under 20 percent of the harvest in, there is some good news to report. The yields are good and the landscape is of golden waves of grain, a welcomed change from the scenery of a year ago.

Two thousand and two was one of the worst years that farmers in Kansas ever faced. Because of severe drought wheat yields were poor, many families had net incomes of zero and farm equities plunged, the trickle down effect of the hard hit causing cash-flow problems for rural businesses and closing down stores on main streets in many small towns across our State.

But after consecutive years of natural disaster, Kansans can finally be cautiously optimistic this year. The harvest reports from producers are more positive and even a little upbeat this year, and the cause for that improvement can best be described in one word, rain. Thanks to the spring rains, many producers are getting their first wheat crop in 3 to 4 years. By the time this harvest is completed the first part of July almost 10 million acres of wheat will have been cut, the largest acreage harvested in our State in the last 5 years.

Behind the numbers of wheat harvest, bushels per acre, test weights, yields, are stories of real people who make farming their way of life. Harvest is a family affair. Although the methods of harvest are constantly changing thanks to new technology, the work ethic passed down from generation to generation still exists. Fathers, sons, grandfathers, brothers work side by side from dawn to sunset. A story in yesterday's Salina Journal paints the typical picture in a profile of the Anderson family from McPherson County. Wheat producer Tim Anderson is on the combine harvesting a field near Roxbury, Kansas. His father, Bill Anderson, is on another combine, and the third is manned by Tim's son Scott, age 17. Younger son Shawn is in a tractor nearby pulling the grain cart. Meanwhile Tim's wife, Renee, arrives in the field in a farm truck bringing lunch to the family. Harvest is a team effort.

In addition to being a family affair, the annual wheat harvest is a trademark claimed by our entire State, and we have been growing wheat there in Kansas since before Kansas became known as "The Wheat State." Kansas's farmers produce more wheat than any other State, 20 percent of the Nation's total production, and Kansas ranks first in our Nation in flour milling, wheat gluten production and wheat stored. Kansas really is the "Breadbasket of the World."