

**Remarks by  
U.S. Representative Tom Allen  
Press Conference  
to release the report  
“Prescription Drugs Are More Expensive in Maine  
than in Canada, Europe, and Japan”  
Betsy Ross House, South Portland  
June 15, 2001**

TODAY I AM RELEASING THE FIFTH IN A SERIES OF REPORTS THAT I HAVE REQUESTED FROM THE MINORITY STAFF SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM.

THIS STUDY COMPARES THE PRICES IN MAINE OF THE FIVE MOST POPULAR DRUGS PRESCRIBED FOR SENIORS WITH THE PRICES OF THE SAME EXACT DRUGS IN THE SIX OTHER INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS WHICH COMPRISE THE G7: CANADA, FRANCE, GERMANY, ITALY, JAPAN, AND THE UNITED KINGDOM.

NOT SURPRISINGLY, THE STUDY FOUND THAT PRICES FOR MAINE SENIORS ARE ABOVE THE AVERAGE FOREIGN PRICE FOR ALL FIVE DRUGS.

WHAT IS TRULY SHOCKING, HOWEVER, IS THE STUNNING DEGREE OF PRICE DIFFERENTIAL BETWEEN PRESCRIPTION DRUGS PURCHASED HERE IN MAINE AND THE PRICES CHARGED IN THE WORLD’S OTHER GREAT ECONOMIES.

THE PRICE OF THESE DRUGS IN MAINE IS ON AVERAGE, 88 PERCENT MORE THAN THE PRICE OF THE SAME DRUGS FROM THE SAME MANUFACTURERS IN OTHER WEALTHY NATIONS.

PRILOSEC, AN ULCER AND HEARTBURN MEDICATION, IS THE DRUG MOST FREQUENTLY PRESCRIBED FOR U.S. SENIORS.

IN ROME, ITALY, A MONTH’S SUPPLY COSTS \$30.

A MONTHLY SUPPLY OF PRILOSEC WILL COST A SENIOR IN ROME, MAINE \$116, **NEARLY FOUR TIMES AS MUCH.**

A MONTH’S SUPPLY OF THE WIDELY PRESCRIBED ARTHRITIS MEDICATION CELEBREX COSTS \$31.20 IN PARIS, FRANCE.

AN ELDERLY WOMAN IN PARIS, MAINE, STRUGGLING ON A FIXED INCOME, CAN EXPECT TO PAY \$77.91 FOR THOSE SAME PILLS.

PREVACID, ALSO AN ULCER MEDICATION, IS THE SECOND MOST WIDELY PRESCRIBED DRUG FOR SENIORS.

AN ELDERLY RESIDENT HERE AT THE BETSY ROSS HOUSE PAYS AROUND \$114 FOR A MONTH'S SUPPLY.

ACROSS THE BORDER IN ST. STEPHEN, NEW BRUNSWICK, THAT MONTH'S SUPPLY OF PREVACID COSTS LESS THAN HALF THAT MUCH, ABOUT \$49.

I'VE INTRODUCED LEGISLATION, H.R. 1400, THE PRESCRIPTION DRUG FAIRNESS FOR SENIORS ACT, TO MAKE DRUGS AVAILABLE TO SENIORS THROUGH THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD PHARMACIES AT THE AVERAGE PRICE OF THESE SAME DRUGS IN CANADA, EUROPE AND JAPAN.

IN OTHER WORDS, THIS REPORT PROVIDES EVIDENCE OF THE BENEFITS OF MY BILL, WHICH REQUIRES PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES TO SELL DRUGS FOR SENIORS IN THE U.S. AT NO MORE THAN THE AVERAGE PRICE THEY CHARGE IN EUROPE, CANADA AND JAPAN.

TODAY'S REPORT CONCLUDES THAT IF MY BILL WERE LAW, SENIORS WOULD SAVE, ON AVERAGE, MORE THAN 40 PERCENT FOR THE SAME DRUGS, IN THE SAME DOSAGE FROM THE SAME MANUFACTURERS.

MY BILL HAS MORE CO-SPONSORS THAN ANY OTHER BILL DEALING WITH PRESCRIPTION DRUGS BEFORE CONGRESS, BUT IT FACES FORMIDABLE AND DETERMINED OPPOSITION FROM THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY, WHICH HAS GROWN RICH AT THE EXPENSE OF THOSE LEAST ABLE TO AFFORD THE DRUGS THEIR DOCTORS PRESCRIBE.

WHY DOES THE NATIONAL SCANDAL OF PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY PRICE GOUGING PERSIST?

WHY, WHEN OTHER INSURANCE PLANS COVER PRESCRIPTION DRUGS, HAS CONGRESS FAILED TO PROVIDE A PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT TO THE 39 MILLION BENEFICIARIES OF MEDICARE, THE NATION'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM FOR

SENIORS?

JUST YESTERDAY, COMMON CAUSE, THE CITIZEN WATCHDOG GROUP, ANSWERED THESE QUESTIONS IN THEIR NEW REPORT, “PRESCRIPTION FOR POWER: HOW BRAND NAME DRUG COMPANIES PREVAILED OVER CONSUMERS IN WASHINGTON.”

OVER THE PAST FIVE ELECTION CYCLES, THE PHARMACEUTICAL RESEARCH AND MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION, THE TRADE GROUP FOR BRAND-NAME DRUG COMPANIES, AND ITS MEMBERS SPENT AN ESTIMATED \$360 MILLION ON POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS, LOBBYING AND ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS TO PROTECT ITS LEGISLATIVE AGENDA.

COMMON CAUSE CONCLUDED THAT “THE INDUSTRY’S MONEY CURE DISARMED ITS CRITICS AND PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN STOPPING ANY ATTEMPTS TO REIN IN PRICES OR INCREASE COMPETITION WITH GENERIC DRUGS.”

EVERYDAY, CASEWORKERS IN MY OFFICE FIELD CALLS FROM MAINE SENIORS STRUGGLING TO FIND A WAY TO AFFORD THE DRUGS THEIR DOCTORS PRESCRIBE.

IF THEY QUALIFY, WE HELP THEM TO ENROLL IN THE MAINE LOW COST DRUGS FOR THE ELDERLY PROGRAM AND THE NEW HEALTHY MAINE PRESCRIPTION PROGRAM.

SINCE MANY DO NOT, WE PROVIDE THEM WITH INFORMATION ABOUT PURCHASING LESS EXPENSIVE DRUGS THROUGH THE MAIL.

OR WE HELP THEM TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE LIMITED FREE DRUG PROGRAMS OFFERED BY A FEW PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES.

WE EVEN TELL THEM HOW TO ORDER THEIR PRESCRIPTION DRUGS FROM CANADA.

WHAT MAINE SENIORS NEED, WHAT SENIORS ACROSS AMERICA NEED, IS IMMEDIATE RELIEF FROM PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY PRICE GOUGING.

THE UNITED STATES IS THE WORLD’S RICHEST NATION, AND WE ARE ENJOYING THE MOST PROSPEROUS TIME IN OUR HISTORY.

WE HAVE THE RESOURCES TO END THE SCANDAL OF SENIORS FORCED TO CHOOSE BETWEEN FOLLOWING THEIR DOCTORS’ ORDERS OR BUYING FOOD, FILLING THE FUEL

TANK OR PAYING THE RENT.

YET, INSTEAD, CONGRESS ENACTED MASSIVE TAX CUTS WEIGHTED TO THE WEALTHY AND A BUDGET RESOLUTION WITHOUT THE FUNDS NEEDED FOR A REAL PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT UNDER MEDICARE.

IT'S TIME TO PUT PEOPLE BEFORE PROFITS.

IT'S TIME TO PUT PRESCRIPTION DRUGS FOR SENIORS BEFORE TAX CUTS FOR BILLIONAIRES.

THANK YOU.