



COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION & LABOR  
REPUBLICANS

COMMITTEE  
STATEMENT

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**Opening Statement of Rep. Tim Walberg (R-MI), Republican Leader  
Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions Hearing:  
“Making Health Care Affordable: Lowering Drug Prices and Increasing  
Transparency”  
September 26, 2019**

(As prepared for delivery)

“There’s no question that health care costs are at the top of the minds for many Americans, and the cost of prescription drugs are a concern for workers and families. According to a recent report on medicine use and spending in the U.S., patients paid \$61 billion in out-of-pocket drug costs in 2018. So, it’s not surprising that that a recent poll found one in four Americans worry about affording their medication.

Sadly, individuals and families are being let down by Democrats. Instead of working on this serious issue in a bipartisan manner, Speaker Pelosi’s radical, partisan bill was drafted in secret, without Member input or the regular Committee process. Republican Leader McCarthy accurately described H.R. 3 as ‘a step toward nationalizing the drug industry and opening the door to a one-size-fits-all, government-controlled rationing of prescription drugs.’

This bill is a political ploy that will not be considered in the Senate or become law. When asked about the bill, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said, ‘Socialist price controls will do a lot of left-wing damage to the healthcare system. And of course, we’re not going to be calling up a bill like that.’

We shouldn’t be surprised that once again Democrats are pushing far-left politics over policy. From taking over all student lending to mandating wage hikes, Democrats are pushing an agenda that strips hardworking taxpayers of their rights. H.R. 3 is just the latest in this string of aggressive socialist policies introduced by Congressional Democrats. Over half of the Democrat Conference supports Medicare-for-All, a government-run, single-payer health care system

that would eliminate private insurance, including employer-sponsored coverage, which is in the jurisdiction of this Committee.

Congressional efforts to bring down drug prices for the American people have been, and should continue to be, a collaborative and bipartisan effort.

In 2016, a Republican Congress passed the *21st Century Cures Act*, bipartisan legislation signed into law by President Obama which accelerated discovery and development of new cures and treatments. Additionally, we reauthorized the generic drug user fee program – and last year the FDA approved a record number of generic drugs, driving up competition and giving consumers more affordable choices.

And this year, House and Senate Committees have worked together on bipartisan bills to address the cost and transparency of prescription drugs. Two of these bills have become law, and others are awaiting further action in both chambers.

Governments don't negotiate, they dictate. The radical approach taken by H.R. 3 includes troubling and unprecedented government interference in private, market negotiations, which will eliminate choice and competition, and jeopardize innovation, investment, and access to future cures.

Countries that have adopted drug-pricing systems like those included in H.R. 3 face decreased access to innovative new medicines, increased wait times for treatment, and supply shortages for in-demand drugs.

H.R. 3 will negatively impact investment in research and development of future treatments, putting breakthrough cures for diseases like Alzheimer's, cancer, sickle cell disease, and others at risk.

Instead of holding a hearing on this socialist agenda drug-pricing scheme that will hurt the development of money-saving treatments and—more importantly—people's lives, the Committee's time would be better spent finding bipartisan solutions to our nation's problems. Republicans stand ready to work with Democrats to push for legislation that promotes competition, lowers out-of-pocket costs for consumers, and establishes transparency and accountability in drug pricing.”

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