



Representative Mitch Greenlick, Chair  
Representative Alisa Keny-Guyer, Vice-Chair  
Representative Jim Thompson, Vice-Chair

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RE: HJM 14

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Good Afternoon Chair Greenlick, Members of the House Health Committee.

My name is Ron Williams, Executive Director of Oregon Action. Oregon Action is a statewide non-partisan, non-profit network of people and organizations dedicated to racial, social and economic justice through individual and group empowerment. Oregon Action has offices in Portland and Medford with more 6,000 members statewide.

I am happy to share the table here today with our national network partner; the Alliance for a Just Society, (formerly the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations) and our statewide small business organizing partner organization; the Main Street Alliance of Oregon.

Thank you for the opportunity to come here today to express Oregon Action's support for House Joint Memorial 14 that urges Congress to enact legislation that would allow the Federal Department of Health and Human Services to negotiate Medicare Prescription Drug Prices.

A recent report by the Center for Economic and Policy Research, "State Savings with an Efficient Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit," compares individual state spending on prescription drugs (using 2009 figures from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) and calculated savings by applying the ratio of drug spending from Canada and Denmark (two countries that allow prescription bargaining by Medicare, but spend different amounts on prescription drugs, with Canada spending more than Denmark).

The report states that "The Oregon state government could save as much as \$766 million over 10 years if the federal government were allowed to negotiate Medicare drug costs in the same way as every other wealthy nation.

Congress should lift the 10-year-old prohibition on price negotiation between Medicare, on behalf of nearly 50 million enrollees, many on fixed incomes, and the drug industry, considered one of the nation's most profitable industries.

Nicole Woo, a senior researcher for CEPR states that "No other country pays as much for prescription drugs as the United States. The reason people in other countries spend so much less is that their governments negotiate prices with the pharmaceutical industry. The Department of Veterans Affairs and the state Medicaid programs already do this and pay far less for the same drugs."



We are anticipating that very soon Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.) and Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) will introduce their Medicare Drug Savings Act to make this happen, and Oregon Senator Jeff Merkley will co-sponsor.

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Our hope is that this memorial will be the catalyst that will motivate all members of Oregon's Congressional Delegation to sign on to support legislation at the federal level that would lead to these significant savings for State of Oregon and for Oregon's Medicare beneficiaries.

**Ron Williams**  
Executive Director