



Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner Hayward, and Rayfield, Vice-Chairs Girod, Gomberg, and Smith, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means,

We represent the Oregon Coalition for Affordable Prescriptions (OCAP) – a group of everyday people affected by high drug prices, health care providers and plans, labor groups, and community organizations. Our coalition was founded with a single goal in mind: lowering prescription drug prices for Oregonians. This can only be accomplished by increasing transparency and placing more scrutiny on the pharmaceutical industry and their sales practices.

As an organization we believe that the simple truth about rising prescription medication costs is as follows: drugs cost too much because the pharmaceutical industry charges too much. We also believe there are some simple steps the state of Oregon can take to help alleviate the ever rising drug costs for seniors and working families throughout the state.

The first of those steps would shed daylight on the secretive marketing tactics of pharmaceutical sales representatives in Oregon. For far too long, these sales representatives have operated behind closed doors – pushing high-cost name brand medications directly to doctors and other health care professionals – all while consumers make tough choices between paying medications or paying for essential needs like food and rent. These backroom deals – that lead to the increased writing of prescriptions for high-priced name brand drugs – must end. Oregon can lift the veil on these pharmaceutical drug marketing practices by requiring sales representatives to register with the state if they want to market their products; to receive education and training on ethical standards; and most importantly, to disclose all of their interactions with providers.

More importantly, the creation of a Prescription Drug Affordability Board would place a much needed level of scrutiny on an industry that cares more about profits than consumers. Once established, an Oregon Prescription Drug Affordability Board would take aim at the skyrocketing cost of critical life-saving medications and identify costs that have excessively increased without reasonable cause. By doing this, Oregon can join other states that have put consumers first and taken similar steps to limit how much people pay for certain medications. The ultimate goal is to drive down prescription costs for all Oregonians – especially our education employees that are currently working hard to help reopen our schools.

We urge this committee to do the right thing by ensuring that Oregon's Human Services Budget includes funding that supports the creation of a Drug Affordability Board (SB844) and allows the state to monitor the sales activities of Pharmaceutical Representatives (SB763). By doing this you will take substantive action during the current legislative session to control the extreme rise in prescription drug prices for all Oregonians.

Thank you for your consideration,

*John Mullin, Board President*

*Oregon Coalition for Affordable Prescriptions (OCAP)*