

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 5, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bernard Sanders
Chairman, Committee on the Budget
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chairman, Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Chairman Sanders, and Chairman Wyden:

We write to urge you to make sure that the upcoming reconciliation bill includes reforms to lower the cost of prescription drugs for all Americans as well as provisions that give Medicare the authority to negotiate the best drug prices.

Too many Americans are struggling to afford the medications they need. Last year, one in three Americans saw their out-of-pocket medication costs increase, and certain brand-name prescription drugs in the United States cost two to four times more than they do in other countries.¹ This has real consequences. We have heard too many stories of people cutting pills in half, skipping doses, or declining to fill their prescriptions altogether as a result of high prices. In fact, nearly 20 percent of older adults report not taking their medicines as prescribed because of the cost.²

To help bring down the cost of prescription drugs, we must allow Medicare to directly negotiate with pharmaceutical companies. Currently, 46 million seniors are enrolled in the Medicare Part D program, and while the program has helped tens of millions of people access life-saving drugs, more must be done to address the high out-of-pocket costs too many Medicare beneficiaries are facing.

We have solutions on the table to help people access the medications they need at the prices they can afford. By allowing Medicare negotiation, we can help cut the cost of prescription drugs while increasing access to life-saving medications. And this idea has broad support. According to

¹ Nguyen, Amanda (March 22, 2021). *Survey: Americans Struggle to Afford Medications as COVID-19 Hits Savings and Insurance Coverage*. GoodRx. <https://www.goodrx.com/blog/survey-covid-19-effects-on-medication-affordability/#:~:text=According%20to%20a%20new%20GoodRx,and%20shelter%20as%20a%20result>; U.S. Government Accountability Office (April 28, 2021). *Prescription Drugs: U.S. Prices for Selected Brand Drugs Were Higher on Average than Prices in Australia, Canada, and France*. <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-282>.

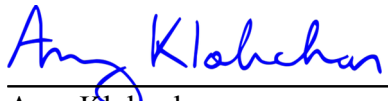
² Kirzinger, Ashley et al. (August 9, 2019). *Data Note: Prescription Drugs and Older Adults*. Kaiser Family Foundation. <https://www.kff.org/health-reform/issue-brief/data-note-prescription-drugs-and-older-adults/>.

a recent poll, nearly 90 percent of Americans support allowing the federal government to negotiate for lower drug prices.³

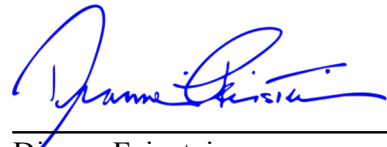
We strongly urge inclusion of provisions to empower Medicare to negotiate drug prices and increase the affordability of prescription drugs in the upcoming reconciliation bill.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,



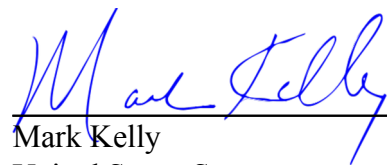
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



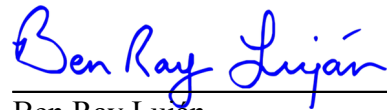
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator

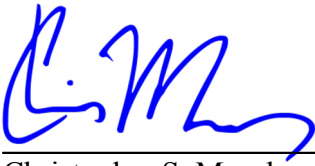


Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

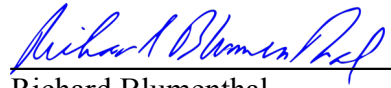


Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

³ Hamel, Liz et al. (June 15, 2021). *Public Opinion on Prescription Drugs and Their Prices*.
<https://www.kff.org/health-costs/poll-finding/public-opinion-on-prescription-drugs-and-their-prices/>.



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator