

Congresswoman Matsui Votes to Require Medicare to Negotiate for Lower Drug Prices Legislation Des

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Negotiate for Lower Drug Prices

Legislation Designed to Lower Drug Costs for Millions of Seniors and People with Disabilities

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Washington, D.C. — Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (C-05) voted to cut the cost of health care and improve access to medicines by requiring the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to negotiate with drug companies for lower drug prices for Medicare beneficiaries. With the passage of the price negotiation bill the House will have completed two-thirds of the Democrats' 100 hours agenda.

"The Medicare prescription drug benefit should have maximized savings for seniors by allowing for price negotiation. Today, with this legislation, we will take the steps to correct that ban and require Medicare to conduct such cost-saving negotiations," stated Congresswoman Matsui. "Currently, the only entity in this country that cannot bargain for lower group drug prices is Medicare. The states, Fortune 500 companies, and large pharmaceutical chains all use their bargaining clout to obtain lower drug prices for the patients they represent. HHS should have the same ability for Medicare beneficiaries."

Unfortunately, the current Medicare prescription drug law has done little to reduce the sky-rocketing costs of prescription drugs. According to a study by Families USA, prices charged by Medicare drug plans are rising at more than twice the rate of overall inflation. This bill provides Medicare broad discretion on how to best implement the negotiating authority and achieve price discounts for Medicare beneficiaries.

Continued Congresswoman Matsui, "I hope the Senate quickly addresses this legislation, so the President can sign it into law. Public opinion polls show that more than 90 percent of the American public believes that HHS should have this authority to negotiate for lower drug prices and wants this bill enacted."

This legislation has the support of dozens of organizations, including AARP, National Community Pharmacists Association, Association of Community Pharmacists, National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, Center for Medicare Advocacy, Medicare Rights Center, Leadership Council of Aging Organizations, Families USA, and

Consumers Union.

The House passed the bill this afternoon by a vote of 255 to 170.

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