



# PATIENTS FOR AFFORDABLE DRUGS NOW™

December 13, 2021

Dear Senator:

Last month, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to approve the Build Back Better Act, which includes critical provisions to lower prescription drug prices and out-of-pocket costs for millions of older Americans and their families. Relief from high drug prices is long overdue and a top priority for patients and seniors. We urge you to pass the prescription drug pricing deal and firmly reject any amendments to weaken it.

The prescription drug pricing provisions in Build Back Better represent a historic breakthrough in support of the health and financial well-being of families across this country, especially for Medicare beneficiaries, who take an average of between four and five prescription medications each month and have a median income of just under \$30,000. The agreement will help lower drug prices, premiums, and out-of-pocket costs while also saving taxpayer dollars and strengthening the Medicare program — which has had no choice but to simply absorb the costs associated with ever-higher drug prices. The agreement reached on drug prices in BBB will finally start to address policies that have left patients and consumers at the mercy of drug corporations and forced Americans to pay three times what other wealthy nations pay for the same medicines.

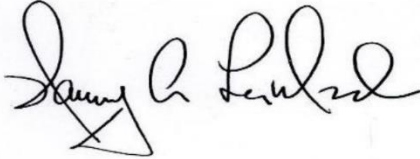
Americans are feeling drug price increases in both what they are paying out of pocket and in their premiums. The recent announcement of a record-high \$22 per month increase in standard Medicare Part B premiums — driven by the introduction of just one new overpriced drug — is the latest example of America's seniors and taxpayers paying the price for the outrageous behavior of the drug industry. A recent AARP Rx Price Watch report found that the average retail price for 143 widely used brand-name drugs on the market since 2006 has increased 302.5 percent over 15 years, compared with a 32 percent increase for general inflation in the same period. **By comparison, if prices for other products rose at the same rate as prescription drugs during that period, a gallon of milk would now cost \$13, and a gallon of gas would cost \$12.20.** These kinds of price increases on other consumer goods would rightfully demand swift action, but seniors have been waiting decades for relief from out-of-control drug prices.

We are deeply concerned about reports that both the brand-name and generic drug industries are pushing to weaken the deal, particularly the Medicare negotiation policy. We strongly oppose these efforts. While we are well aware of the importance of less expensive generic and biosimilar drugs, we are equally aware that their prices are based on brand-name drug prices, creating a strong financial incentive to ensure that drug prices remain high. We strongly urge senators to

reject any drug company-motivated amendments to weaken the deal, which would come at the expense of seniors, patients, and taxpayers.

Reducing drug prices is not an afterthought for the American people: It is the single most popular element of the Build Back Better plan. Indeed, a recent independent survey showed overwhelming public support, with more than 8 out of 10 Americans, regardless of party, supporting this reform. We call on the Senate to pass the legislation quickly.

Sincerely,



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Executive Vice President and  
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AARP



David Mitchell  
President and Founder  
Patients For Affordable Drugs Now