
SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8001

State of Washington

57th Legislature

2001 Regular Session

By Senators Franklin, Thibaudeau, Winsley, Costa and Kohl-Welles

Read first time 01/08/2001. Referred to Committee on Health & Long-Term Care.

1 TO THE HONORABLE GOVERNORS OF THE STATES OF WASHINGTON, OREGON,
2 IDAHO, ALASKA, AND MONTANA, AND TO THE HONORABLE GEORGE W. BUSH,
3 PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE
4 AND SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES,
5 IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED:

6 We, Your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives
7 of the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled,
8 respectfully represent and petition as follows:

9 WHEREAS, Thanks to significant investments in research and
10 development by pharmaceutical manufacturers, prescription
11 medications offer ever more safe, effective, and economical means
12 of managing and treating a widening range of illnesses and
13 conditions; and

14 WHEREAS, Prescription medications are the most rapidly
15 expanding component of health care in the Northwest and the United
16 States; and

17 WHEREAS, The prices of most prescription medications developed
18 and marketed in the United States are relatively high compared to
19 the prices of these same medications in other countries and other
20 markets; and

1 WHEREAS, Expenditures on prescription medications for Medicaid
2 recipients in Washington has risen substantially in recent years,
3 placing severe strains on the operating budget of the department
4 of social and health services; and

5 WHEREAS, The federal government, unlike its counterparts in
6 other countries, applies neither its regulatory authority nor its
7 purchasing power to the prices of prescription medication which
8 consequently are markedly higher in the United States than in
9 other countries; and

10 WHEREAS, The United States stands virtually alone among the
11 major countries of the world in recognizing and protecting the
12 legitimate patent rights of companies that develop new
13 prescription medications yet places no reciprocal obligations on
14 these companies to provide reasonable and affordable access to
15 these patented medications; and

16 WHEREAS, The federal government, by legislating to ensure
17 relatively low prices for prescription medications purchased by
18 federal agencies like the Veteran's Administration and for federal
19 programs like Medicaid, while maintaining barriers against state
20 governments taking similar measures, has exacerbated the impact of
21 prescription medication prices on the citizens of the state; and

22 WHEREAS, The high prices of prescription medications weigh most
23 heavily on the least fortunate and most vulnerable citizens, the
24 uninsured and underinsured, as well as those stricken by serious
25 and chronic illnesses and conditions requiring intensive and
26 extensive treatment; and

27 WHEREAS, Managing prices of prescription medications and
28 expanding access to necessary medication will decrease the overall
29 cost of health care by reducing the demand for hospital visits and
30 emergency services and the need for surgical and other expensive
31 procedures;

32 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that in
33 seeking to ensure reasonable prescription medication prices for
34 the citizens of Washington, the state of Washington, through its
35 duly elected and appointed officials, should explore the
36 possibility of acting in concert with other Northwest states to
37 pursue this goal; and

1 BE IT RESOLVED, That the Northwest states should consider
2 cooperative strategies to address the challenge of the high cost
3 of prescription medications, including:

4 (1) Model legislation to ensure citizens access to prescription
5 medications at reasonable and affordable prices;

6 (2) Joint pricing and purchasing agreements for prescription
7 medications;

8 (3) Programs to provide and facilitate access of qualified
9 citizens to supplies of free and discounted prescription
10 medications offered by pharmaceutical manufacturers; and

11 (4) Initiatives to encourage and ensure medications are
12 prescribed in the most effective manner; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be
14 immediately transmitted to the Honorable Governors of the States
15 of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Alaska, and Montana, and to the
16 Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United States of
17 America, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of
18 the House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from the
19 State of Washington.

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