

In the district I represent, Sonoma County seniors pay on the average of 145 percent more for the most commonly used drugs than favored customers pay for the same drugs. For one drug, they pay 242 percent more than favored customers. I know this, because I asked the minority staff of the Committee on Government Reform to look into prescription drug pricing in Sonoma and Marin Counties. I released the results to that report to my community and its central conclusion can be summed up in the report subtitle, Drug Companies Profit at the Expense of Older Americans. As Members can see by these charts, for Sonoma County alone, the study looked into five commonly used prescription drugs, charted their price at local pharmacies and compared those prices to what the Federal Government pays for the same drugs. The Federal negotiated price is nearly the same, you must know, as that charged to favored private customers, large insurance companies and HMOs. Senior citizens and other individuals who pay for their own drugs pay more than twice as much for these drugs than do the drug companies' most favored customers. For some drugs listed in the report, the price is even more outrageous. Synthroid, for example, a hormone treatment, costs Sonoma County seniors 1,738 percent more than it cost the manufacturer's favored customers. By looking at these charts, we can see that for Medicare patients, those who need the cholesterol drug Zocor, their costs are significantly greater than the favored customers. This comes out to \$115 for Medicare patients and \$34 for the favored customers. That is 231 percent different. The difference is not in price because the HMOs, the large insurance companies and government buyers are able to negotiate and buy in bulk. The difference is because they are charging seniors to make up the difference for what they cut for their most favored customers.

INTRODUCING LEGISLATION TO HELP AMERICA'S FARMERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NETHERCUTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Madam Speaker, American agriculture today and rural communities today face an extraordinary challenge, the challenge of having farm policy change in 1996 with the consent and approval of this Congress and the consent and approval of the President of the United States for the good, to have an opportunity to have less farming for the government and more farming for the market. Overall, combined with the freedom that this new agriculture policy provides and the additional expenditure of taxpayer dollars for agriculture research with the movement toward reduction of Federal regulations that hampered the farmer's

freedom to do what the farmer does best, and that is farm for the market and other changes that were made in the 1996 farm bill, it has overall been a good thing. What the American farmer faces today is low prices and lack of markets. Our farmers do not have the ability to market overseas the products that we grow so well in this country.

My State of Washington is a perfect example, and the Fifth Congressional District is a more narrow example of a perfect example. That is, our farmers in the Fifth District grow wheat and barley and oats and peas and lentils and potatoes and apples, the best in the world. But yet most of our products, on our grain products and commodities, are exported overseas. My farmers are limited in those exports because of unilateral American sanctions on countries that used to be wonderful trading partners of Washington State farmers and agriculture in the West.

I have introduced legislation, H.R. 212, earlier in this Congress as a priority matter for not only the farmers of the Pacific Northwest but the farmers of the country. What that bill does is lift the unilateral sanctions that are currently in place by our government that prevent our farmers from selling to countries that other farmers around the world can sell to. We used to have a fine market in wheat sales to Iran and Iraq and the Sudan and other places that are currently sanctioned. The sanctions are imposed because of our disagreements with the terrorist policies and the enemy policies of these governments.

I disagree with those policies of those rogue nations that have used terror in the world and oppression in the world. But yet selling agriculture and medicine to those countries does not in my judgment pose a national security threat on our country. What it does as we unilaterally impose those sanctions is hurt our farmers. So H.R. 212 does two things. It lifts the sanctions that are currently in place for food and medicine only, and it gives the President the opportunity in the event that the President feels that lifting those sanctions poses a national security threat, the President has the ability to reimpose those sanctions on that basis. But in the meantime, it allows our farmers, then, to seek to reclaim those markets that we have lost by virtue of the sanctions.

In 1980, President Carter imposed a sanction on the Soviet Union for political purposes. Who did that hurt? It hurt the Olympics, and the American interest in the Olympics, and it hurt American farmers, a market that was a prime market for my farmers in the West. We have yet to get that agriculture market back by virtue of those sanctions back in 1980.

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Yesterday in the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related

Agencies on which I serve as a subcommittee member I introduced a narrower version of H.R. 212 which would lift of the sanctions on food and medicine for these countries that are currently sanctioned, but it would not allow any government spending in connection with the lifting of those sanctions. In other words, the taxpayer would not bear any of the burden for allowing our farmers to deal directly with those countries and make sales. It is a \$6 billion plus market for our farmers in commodities as diverse as rice and corn and peas and wheat and barley. It is a great market that is exposed to our farmers.

Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, my friends on the appropriations subcommittee defeated this amendment by a vote of 28 to 24. It was a very close vote, but it was a great debate, and we ought to have that debate again on H.R. 212 and on this next version of this amendment that went into the appropriation bill yesterday.

So, I urge my colleagues to study H.R. 212, study the concept of lifting sanctions on food and medicine. It is a humanitarian basis that is good policy for our country, and it will absolutely help our agriculture markets who are struggling to find markets overseas.

One final point: In the event that we lift these sanctions and allow farmer-to-country correspondence and sales, it prevents the agriculture community that is in straits from coming to the Congress and seeking Federal tax dollars. It is the free market approach to agriculture success.

INTRODUCTION OF THE BROADCASTERS FAIRNESS IN ADVERTISING ACT OF 1999

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. EMERSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. RUSH. Madam Speaker, today I am here to introduce the Broadcasters Fairness in Advertising Act of 1999. There is a silent and pervasive trend among ad agencies and the companies they represent to engage in discriminatory practices which are called, quote, "no urban/Spanish dictates" end of quote, and they are called, quote, "minority discounts," end of quote. The term: "No urban slash Spanish dictates" means not advertising products on stations that cater to minorities. "Minority discounts" means paying minority-owned stations far less for advertising the same product that is paid to nonminority-owned stations. These policies have no business rationale and are purely discriminatory.

Madam Speaker, year in and year out minority broadcasters lose millions of dollars in revenues, however the advertising companies would have us believe otherwise. They will contend that they do not advertise in these stations because minorities do not buy their products.

For example, in a study conducted by the FCC, a major mayonnaise manufacturer told a station manager that, quote, black people do not eat mayonnaise, end of quote. Or worse, one minority station salesperson was told that, and I quote again, black people do not eat beef, end of quote. Such a blatantly absurd statement demonstrates the openly racist obstacles minority broadcasters face from the advertising industry.

My bill will prohibit discrimination against minority formatted stations by directing the FCC to adopt regulations to prevent such discrimination. It would also allow private right of action by any minority broadcaster who has been subjected to advertising discrimination. And finally, my bill will prohibit Federal agencies from contracting with ad agencies that utilize these discriminatory practices.

Madam Speaker, I sincerely hope that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join me in supporting this very, very important initiative.

ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF KURDISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about democracy, a form of government which was invented in the 5th century B.C. by the Greeks in Athens, great city of Athens. The British honor democracy through their parliament, the Japanese have their Diet, the Duma serves the Russians, and of course here in the United States democracy is exercised right here on the floor of Congress. Democracy still remains the best hope for troubled humanity throughout the world.

With the end of the Cold War, Madam Speaker, we have seen a great expansion of the boundaries of democracy. The world is a better place today because many former Soviet republics now enjoy self determination and are given their rightful seats in the Hall of Nations. But auspicious as has been the forward march of liberty, the world remains far from being free. Nations remain in captivity. The color of one's skin still bars some from feeling our common humanity. But the hope that we can rise to the challenge of total equality is enduring. People of goodwill are risking their lives against great odds. They know the rewards are worth the risks.

Madam Speaker, on May 24, 1999, just a few days from now, a nation whose voice has been silenced for too long will convene its first congress, unfortunately not in its own land but in Brussels, Belgium, and 150 delegates from around the world representing the Kurdish people of Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran and the former Soviet republics will assemble for the purpose of raising

their voice for their brothers and sisters who are denied a voice in Kurdistan. I salute the birth of this congress that represents a people as old as the dawn of history.

Madam Speaker, the Kurds are natives of the Middle East who inhabit a mountainous region as large as the State of Texas. They speak Kurdish, which is distinct from Turkish and Arabic but is closely linked with Persian. Having survived in mountain strongholds and ancient empires, they are now persecuted, denied their identity and forced to become Turks or Arabs or Persian by the states that were born in the early 20th century. Thirty million strong, they are viewed as beasts of burden or as cannon fodder, but never as Kurds who should enjoy human rights that we take for granted in this country.

It is a crime to be a Kurd in Turkey, Madam Speaker. Saddam Hussein has used chemical and biological weapons against them in Iraq. The theocracy in Tehran often machine guns the Kurdish dissidents in the city squares. The poignancy of the Kurdish situation hits closer to home when we realize that our own government is sometimes involved in their misery. Turkey boasts of American F-16 fighter planes, Sikorsky attack helicopters and M-60 battle tanks. Saddam Hussein, according to some declassified U.N. documents, had the support of 24 European companies to produce his deadly chemical fumes and biological fumes. Tehran's opposition to the Kurds has gone beyond Iran with the assassination of Kurdish leaders in Vienna and Berlin.

We all revere the words of Thomas Jefferson when he wrote in the Declaration of Independence: "When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."

Madam Speaker, given the lot of the Kurds, it is more than understandable that they set up their own Congress and take charge of their own destiny. They have the people, the resources and the political understanding to succeed in their dream of statehood.

Madam Speaker, I need also at this time to address the situation of Abdullah Ocalan, the Kurdish leader who, according to a recent New York Times article, was handed over to the Turks with the help of our intelligence services. As you may recall, he had ventured to Europe from his home base in the Middle East to seek a political solution to the enduring Kurdish struggle for basic human rights. I spoke on this floor welcoming his declaration of cease-fire and hoped, it now seems against hope, to see the debate on the Kurdish question change from war to

peace and from confrontation to dialogue.

Mr. Ocalan, denied a refuge in Rome, was promised the safe passage through Greece to the Hague where he intended to sue the Government of Turkey at the International Court of Justice for its crimes against the Kurds. But the laws of granting asylum to political figures, as old as the time of prophets, were suspended in this case. Abdullah Ocalan, the most popular Kurdish figure of the day, was arrested. Through a deal that smacks of political venality at its worst, he was handed over to the Turks and now awaits his most likely execution as the sole inmate in the Imrali Island prison in the Sea of Marmara.

Madam Speaker, it is unbecoming of this great power to aid and abet dictatorships which are merely disguised as democracies. Those who imprison duly elected representatives such as Layla Zana in Turkey for testifying before a standing committee of this Congress cannot and should not enjoy our support. Leaders such as Abdullah Ocalan, despite his violent past, still hold the promise of peace and reconciliation for the Kurds with their neighbors. The euphoria that we all felt for the freedom of captive nations in the former Soviet Union now must extend to our allies and their subjects as well.

So we welcome the convening of the National Congress of Kurdistan. They are dreaming what to many may seem an impossible dream, the dream of a united Kurdish people in the Nation of Kurdistan.

TAIWAN CONGRATULATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Madam Speaker, 3 years ago President Lee won a landslide victory in the first presidential election in the history of China. As a democratic elected president, he demonstrated to the world that democracy could indeed thrive in Taiwan. During the last 3 years President Lee continued to implement his program for the Republic of China. As a result, Taiwan presently has free elections in every level of government, a free press, and holds respect for human rights in the highest regard.

As a believer in increasing cooperation between Taiwan and mainland China, President Lee continued to emphasize that it is necessary for Taiwan and the mainland to work together to conduct further discussions on the issue of reunification. Many close to the president maintain that his one true dream is to witness a unified China under the principle of democracy rules, free enterprise and the distribution of wealth.

A few years ago I had the privilege of being President Lee's guest on a visit to Taiwan. Since that time I perceive him as a world class statesman and