

prescription drugs are 30 to 70 percent cheaper than they are on the American shelves at our pharmacies and grocery stores.

Members of this body on both sides of the aisle last year voted against the pharmaceutical industry's intense lobbying where they spent well over \$200-some-odd million, they hired well over 600 lobbyists to try to prevent the American consumers and senior citizens from accessing drugs and prescription drugs and medications that their doctors prescribed at prices that they can afford.

People from all over the world come to the United States for their medical care. Yet, Americans are forced to go all over the world for their medications. That is wrong. We can do better.

Prices here in the United States are artificially kept high because of a closed market. What this would allow, the legislation allowing reimportation, would allow Americans to have an open market, a free market when it comes to the pricing of prescription drugs.

Every other product, cars, autos, software, food, we have free access, and Americans pay some of the lowest prices in the world. There is only one product line Americans have a closed market to and we are forced to pay the highest prices in the world and that is in the area of prescription drugs.

In Canada, in Europe, the same medications that we find on our shelves here are, as I said, 30 to 70 percent cheaper. Americans know that. 2 million seniors a year go over the Canadian-U.S. border to get their prescription drugs with their prescriptions that their doctors have asked them to take. Rather than cut pills in half, rather than skip a month, rather than skip a day, rather than allow only their spouse to get medications and preventing themselves from getting medications, those seniors go over to Canada, save hundreds upon hundreds of dollars a month in their prescription drugs.

What this legislation would do is allow the free market to work, creating competition, bringing prices down, and ensuring the American consumer, American seniors and, most importantly, now that we have a prescription drug bill to Medicare, the American taxpayer that they would get their fair price and world price for world-class drugs.

What is ironic here is that the American taxpayer pays for the research for these new life saving medications both through the direct funding of the National Institute of Health and through the R&D tax credit. The American taxpayer is subsidizing the pharmaceutical industry's research and development in new life-saving drugs. And yet what do we get for all that taxpayer support for the industry? We get to pay the highest prices in the world. That is the unique position of the American senior citizen and taxpayer.

The reimportation of prescription drugs would allow our seniors, our fam-

ilies who need medications for their children and for their parents, would allow them those medications at the prices that consumers in Europe and Canada are paying which is 30 to 70 percent cheaper.

It is the right thing to do not only because we pay for the R&D, but it is the right thing to do if you believe in the free market. We should allow the free market to work, creating that competition, bringing prices down. As I said, literally 2 million seniors a year do it every year. They have been doing it for years going to Canada, finding somewhere close to a little over a \$1 billion worth of savings.

We are voting on it for the third time here in the House. Hopefully in the other body they will now begin to take up this legislation and start to create that bipartisan focus on bringing the prices of prescription drugs down.

I set up in my office a Web site, just so my colleagues know, we took Costco which is a discount retailer, we have a Costco in Chicago. We listed the 10 most used drugs by senior citizens and the price at that Costco in Chicago of those 10 medications. Then we took the Costco in Toronto, same store, same medications, same discounts. In Canada one would save, versus the United States, for those same medications close to \$1,000 if one bought at the Costco in Canada versus the Costco in Chicago. That is a discount retailer. And people know that. And we must afford our seniors the ability to get the medications they need at the prices they can afford.

Everybody lately has been touting this Health and Human Services discount card, the Medicare discount card. In fact, in Canada one would save more than one would on that discount card. In our 70 percent of that discount card, the fact is that the reimportation would allow one cheaper savings than it does on that discount card. If the discount card was designed for senior citizens, it would not be as complicated. It was not designed for senior citizens, it was designed for the pharmaceutical industries that invested close to \$200 million in that legislation.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG REIMPORTATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, last year Republicans here in the House approved the prescription drug bill that did more to help the pharmaceutical companies than senior citizens. The pharmaceutical companies can continue to charge outrageous prices because Republicans refuse to give the Secretary of Health and Human Services the ability to negotiate better prices for seniors in the government.

The pharmaceutical companies also benefit from the fact that Republicans

also refuse to allow for the reimportation of prescription drugs from other countries. My colleagues probably heard of seniors taking bus trips across the border into Canada to purchase their prescription drugs. And that is because drugs in other countries, including Canada, cost 40 percent less than they do here.

This year alone experts at Boston University estimate that Americans would save \$59.7 billion by paying Canadian prices for brand name drugs, and, yet, Republicans refuse to include a provision in their legislation that would provide seniors with this much needed assistance.

Why would Republicans pass a prescription drug bill that helps the pharmaceutical companies out more than the very seniors who have been waiting for help? What one of the reasons is that the Bush administration's main negotiator on the bill, then Medicare administrator Tom Scully, was actually looking for a job with the very pharmaceutical companies at the same time he was hammering out the final Medicare legislation.

Mr. Speaker, there is no better indication that Medicare administrator Tom Scully was working on behalf of the pharmaceutical companies than when he refused to provide critical information to one of my democratic colleagues on the actual cost of the Medicare bill. Last week the Bush administration announced that Tom Scully did, indeed, threaten to fire Richard Foster, a career civil servant, if Foster told Congress that the Republican prescription drug bill would actually cost more than they previously thought. Now, unfortunately, even though the administration has admitted that, Scully cannot be punished for withholding this information to Congress. He no longer works at Health and Human Services. Guess where he works? He now lobbies for the drug companies.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my democratic colleagues and I, we really feel very strongly that we have to continue to fight this new Medicare law and will work to provide seniors a meaningful benefit within the Medicare system. We still can have a good law. Today, thanks to the tenaciousness of the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) we are going to vote on an appropriations bill amendment that allows for the safe reimportation of prescription drugs. The gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) offered the amendment in committee last week. Republicans tried to block it but they failed. And that is because it is the right thing to do.

Seniors need help now with lower drugs costs and the reimportation provisions that Democrats inserted into the agriculture appropriation bill. I think it is a good start.

Democrats have also filed a discharge petition on a bill that would finally allow the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate for cheaper prices on behalf of the more than 40

million Medicare beneficiaries. The bill we want to bring to the floor ensures that the government will use the purchasing power of millions of seniors to negotiate lower drug costs just like we do for the veterans health care system. And this would lower prices by about 50 percent.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in order to truly help seniors with the prescription drug bills, we have to do something about the outrageous and skyrocketing costs. That is the key. Republicans and the pharmaceutical companies shamefully refuse to address the cost issue. As I have stated before, Democrats will continue to work on behalf of America's seniors and continue to fight to pass legislation that finally addresses the high cost of prescription drugs.

AD GROWTH INDUSTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized during morning hour debates for 4 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, the President keeps telling America that his administration is good for the economy. I have to admit under this administration one sector is booming. In fact, booming may not be a strong enough descriptor. Stellar, bottomless, and gusher could easily describe the runaway growth in the need and use of political campaign commercials by the administration's campaign.

They are awash in cold, hard cash, and they are spending it as fast as they can get it in. They are spending more on airing a 30-second commercial than the network spends on making a 30-minute hit show. Talk about a growth industry.

The networks have brought us reality TV, but this administration has brought us fiction TV. After 30 seconds one would swear the moon is made of Swiss cheese and the U.S. economy is too good to be true. Remember what our mothers taught us, if it is too good to be true, it is not true.

Every time a new spot runs extolling the virtues of the administration, keep these numbers handy because the administration will not be talking about them: Since the President took office the stock market is down. Yes, down. Forget the slight-of-mouth they are attempting, look the numbers up. The Dow Jones industrial average is lower than when the President came in. 4 years later they have negative growth in the stock market. Is that the kind of economy America wants?

If one is saving for their retirement, they have just experienced 4 years of net loss. If one is living on a fixed income, their nest egg has 4 years of constant financial assault. If one is a tech buff, the same is true about the NASDAQ, 4 years later it is significantly lower than when he came in. Is that the kind of economy that is good for America? Four years later the money is worth less, lots less.

So the administration uses special effects in its commercials to make it seem like Americans are better off. The smoke and mirrors might cloud the truth, but the smoke is only good for 30 seconds and then reality takes over.

If the administration wants to take credit, and they say they do, then they have to take credit for the U.S. stock markets that are lower than when they came in. The stock markets tell the story about the U.S. economy under the stewardship of this administration.

This can be summed up this way: The privileged few became the beneficiaries of the administration's use of our tax money. Do not let their commercials trick my colleagues into thinking anything else. Millionaires got a cool extra \$100,000 from this administration's tax cuts. Go look at your own 1040 and do the math. What did you get? The average is about \$700. The administration gave the rich about \$10,000 per month and the rest of America got 60 bucks a month. That is a lot of zeros. That is a lot of smoke and mirrors to cover that up.

Now the administration claims we never look at what has been going on. So let us be fair. When the President took office, the Nation's unemployment rate was 4.2 percent. Today's unemployment rate is 30 percent higher than it was when the President took office. That is the record. But one will not find it in any commercial that this administration is showing.

Millions of Americans are without jobs. I cannot call that economic growth. I call it a real life crisis for people when they cannot find a job and the administration is unwilling to help. Unemployment is 30 percent higher today than when the President took office. This administration has 2 million jobs less than when they took office. That record is only surpassed by the great Herbert Hoover in the Great Depression.

Now, there is a commercial for you. The administration would need a lot of extra smoke to cover that up. The administration's economic policies have their closest comparison with the Great Depression. These are the facts. One might say this is reality TV just in case all those fictional accounts of the U.S. economy under the administration have one confused.

With the amount of smoke the American administration is using, it is no wonder the level of pollution across America is higher than ever. America is choking from pollution caused by their fictional TV adds. They have got 112 more days and it is over.

SUDAN GENOCIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 2 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we should be troubled by a

number of concerns that are getting sometimes less attention than I think they should. First let me say I am so very proud to acknowledge two Members in the other body that will be addressing the Payne-Wolf resolution to declare the acts in Sudan genocide. With 400,000 people displaced, women and children and men being murdered, villages being burned, the world watches.

I am reminded of the millions who died in Rwanda. And we cannot stand idly by. It is imperative that the people of Sudan rise up in opposition to their government that continues to allow the murder and pillage against those innocent individuals.

I look forward to working with the United States Congress in ensuring that Sudan, the government in Khartoum, understands that we mean business and will not stand by while this tragic, murderous brutality occurs.

Then, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the American people to look closely at this question of the CIA intelligence breakdown before the war in Iraq. Because I believe every life is precious. And I believe our Constitution ensures that we in America pride ourselves in supporting peace over war and that we understand the importance of teaching and giving truth to the American people.

And so this breakdown in intelligence, which caused or at least gave to the Congress the basis upon which that resolution was passed, many of us knew it was wrong and voted against it, we should not allow that perspective to go off silently into the night. It is important for the American people to ask the question why and to get the right answers.

Because it is important when we take our young soldiers, our family members into war, they go into battle on truth and on a Constitutional purpose and that Congress votes for war in a Constitutional manner.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this country has the opportunity to rise to its highest moral values and that means that it does believe that freedom is not free and that we all will rise to defend our Nation and that we recognize the tragedy of 9/11, that we will not use falsehoods, however, in order to engage in a war that could have been solved by U.N. inspectors, could have been solved by coalition.

So I ask my colleagues to help support the resolution that we offered in the Senate and the one in the House on Sudan. I ask my colleagues to ask the questions of why our intelligence failed, that it never fail again that we send out Americans into war for falsehoods as opposed to truth.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.