

LARSON, HOUSE Rx DRUG IMPORTATION COALITION RESPOND TO SCARE TACTIC ADS RUNNING IN CONNECTICUT, ACRO

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Congressman Blasts Drug Industry and Backers for Misleading Ads

WASHINGTON, D.C.- At a Capitol Hill press conference this afternoon, U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) and a bi-partisan coalition of House Members today responded to misleading ads that are running in Connecticut and throughout the nation on the issue of prescription drug importation. The ads tell Americans to call their Member of Congress and urge them to vote against the Pharmaceutical Market Access Act, H.R. 2724, a bill that would allow importation of prescription drugs from industrialized countries to America, allowing many to pay a significantly lower price for the medication.

The ads attempt to frighten people by suggesting that imported prescription drugs are dangerous or unsafe. However, the bill would in fact establish extensive safety precautions to ensure imported prescription drugs are safe. The legislation will likely be on the House floor next week.

Larson stated: "I consider it a badge of honor to be attacked by the pharmaceutical industry and their backers and I will continue to stand up for the needs of seniors over the profits of the industry. The ads that are clogging the airwaves in Connecticut and across the nation are desperate scare tactics designed to frighten Americans into continuing to pay outrageously high prices for prescription drugs. It is no surprise that the pharmaceutical companies are one of the groups behind the effort to stop prescription drug importation to America and ensure that many Americans, especially seniors, continue to struggle to pay for their medicines. The pharmaceutical companies make enormous profits on the backs of Americans by charging incredibly high prices for prescription drugs, while the rest of the world pays a fraction of what most Americans pay. These companies and associations are terrified that Congress has found a way to lower drugs costs through importation and the reaction comes in the form of these negative, misleading ads.

"Importation is simply opening up the market to FDA-approved prescription drugs from nations where consumers pay about half of what people are charged in this country and the end result is reduced drug costs for Americans," said Larson.

The following is a sample scare tactic ad script that has run in Connecticut and throughout the nation, which is part of an effort by the pharmaceutical industry including the Biotechnology Industry Organization and the Pharmaceutical Research Manufacturers of American (PhRMA), as well as groups claiming to represent the interests of seniors:

"The following is an important message for America's patients paid for by The Seniors Coalition, on behalf of The Partnership for Safe Medicines. Today when you go to the drugstore and fill a prescription, you never think twice about whether that medicine is real or fake, safe or dangerous, because the FDA Gold Standard has been protecting Americans for decades. Shockingly, Congress is set to vote on changes to that safe system. This legislation would allow drugs to be imported from all over the world. The Department of Health and Human Services and the FDA have fought against these ideas for years. The FDA has warned that this change would open America's borders to a stream of imported prescription drugs for which the FDA cannot assure safety, effectiveness, or quality. It's one thing for a politician to risk their own life with unsafe medicines; it's another for them to risk yours. Contact Congressman X at X. Tell him to vote no on drug importation. For more information go to <http://www.safemedicines.org>."

Larson stated: "These ads suggest that drugs from other nations would not go through the same FDA approval process as drugs purchased in the U.S. - that is entirely false. In reality, the only drugs that could come into this country under this legislation would be FDA approved drugs produced in FDA approved facilities. The ads are completely misleading and I would urge Americans to look for themselves at exactly who is behind them.

"For instance, the so-called 'Seniors Coalition' is nothing more than a front for the pharmaceutical industry that also supports privatizing Social Security and massive tax cuts for the wealthy. In 2000, it listed its biggest financial backer as being PhRMA, a leading pharmaceutical industry group. The big pharmaceutical companies and the special interest groups they bankroll or support are spending millions of dollars to fight the efforts to reduce prescription drugs costs for Americans, and I urge my constituents to reject their misleading and ridiculous ads," said Larson.

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For more information and a fact sheet on the so-called "Seniors Coalition," please visit:

<http://www.house.gov/larson/seniorscoalition.pdf>

For more information on PhRMA, the drug industry interest group, and a fact sheet please visit:

<http://www.house.gov/larson/phrma.pdf>