

## Legislation will require federal government to negotiate directly with drug companies

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### LARSON VOTES TO LOWER PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS FOR SENIORS

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-1) today voted in favor of H.R. 4, the Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act. Larson is also an original cosponsor of the bill, which passed the House by a bipartisan vote of 255 to 170.

Larson stated: "Medicare Part D was passed in 2003 as a privatization plan masquerading as prescription drug relief. The Republican leadership claimed that market forces would drive down the costs of medications for seniors. Tell that to seniors who fell into the doughnut hole. Now they argue against the Secretary of Health and Human Services using the market force of 43 million Medicare beneficiaries to achieve prescription drug discounts. It makes me wonder if they're on the side of America's seniors or the big pharmaceutical companies.

"Democrats have pledged that the 110th Congress would not be about the wealthiest one percent of Americans or large corporations. We pledged to be here for working families struggling to pay their bills, young people facing the skyrocketing costs of education, and seniors burdened by the excessive costs of healthcare. H.R. 4 will lower prescription drug costs for seniors so they do not have to choose between life-saving medications and paying their utility bills or purchasing groceries."

The Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act will repeal the current law prohibiting the Secretary of Health and Human Services from negotiating with drug companies for lower prices for seniors enrolled in Medicare drug plans. Not only will it repeal the prohibition, it will require the Secretary to conduct these negotiations and report back to Congress about his progress. Larson introduced legislation in 2003 before the Medicare prescription drug benefit was passed in Congress to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to work with the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to negotiate on behalf of the millions of American seniors, veterans, and military families that they serve.

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