

H.R. 3, the Lower Drug Costs Now Act, In the News

Last week, House Democrats passed H.R.3, the Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act, and delivered on our pledge to address the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs. Members are discussing passage of the bill and how it will bring down prices for constituents across the country. Here's a look at what they are saying:

ALABAMA

Alabama Political Reporter: “Thursday, **U.S. Representative Terri Sewell**, D-Selma, praised the House passage of HR3, the Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act... ‘I have heard from too many Alabamians who struggle to afford their prescription drug costs and who have been forced to make countless sacrifices because of the skyrocketing cost of their life-saving medications. HR3 is much-needed, bold and innovative legislation that will lower drug costs for all Americans,’ Sewell said.”
[[12/13/19](#)]

CALIFORNIA

Sacramento Bee: “California Democrats are touting the thousands of dollars that people with diabetes, HIV, arthritis asthma and cancer could save if a bill to lower drug costs that passed the House of Representatives Thursday becomes law... ‘If you think about this, this is the most transformational expansion of Medicare since its creation,’ said **Rep. Doris Matsui**, D-Sacramento, who helped usher the bill through committee. ‘This is something that is a North Star for Democrats. This is our moment, and this is what we want to do.’”

“‘There are people who have to make a choice between putting food on their table, paying utilities or paying for their medicine. That is unacceptable to me,’ said **Rep. TJ Cox**, D-Fresno.”

“‘This comes down to the promises we made in the election. What I hear again and again as the No. 1 issue, across the Central Valley, is the cost of health care,’ said **Rep. Josh Harder**, D-Turlock. ‘One woman told me she had to buy medication for her dog and use it for herself because it was cheaper.’” [[12/13/19](#)]

KFBK-AM: “The House of Representatives... voted to approve a resolution aimed at cutting prescription drug prices. **Congressman Doris Matsui** [said] the landmark legislation would give Medicare the power to negotiate directly with drug companies to bring down prices and make the savings available to all Californians with private insurance...” [[12/12/19](#)]

KGET: “Well, this is a great first step forward with commonsense legislation to bring down the [inaudible] high cost of prescription drugs to so many people in my district, California, and across the nation,” said **Rep. TJ Cox** in an interview. [[12/13/19](#)]

Fox40 News: “Why are Americans paying more for the exact same drugs? Well, this bill, H.R. 3, will put an end to that,” said **Rep. Judy Chu** in an interview. [[12/13/19](#)]

Spectrum News 1: “I’ve taken care of patients who come into the emergency department either gasping for air or barely conscious with severe illnesses because they couldn’t afford their medicine... Taking care of patients as a doctor, I’ve committed to do that my entire life, and I’m committed to do that now as a Representative,” said **Rep. Raul Ruiz** in an interview. [[12/13/19](#)]

Spectrum News 1: “You know, my father suffers from diabetes. When he was first diagnosed, he didn’t have health insurance. He used to have to go down to Mexico to buy his prescription drugs because they were just a lot more affordable to him there,” said **Rep. Gil Cisneros** in an interview. [[12/13/19](#)]

Spectrum News 1: “We want you to be healthy, and this is one way that we’re guaranteeing that you will be able to do that,” said **Rep. Norma Torres** in an interview. [[12/13/19](#)]

Spectrum News 1: “I am so glad that finally, we will be able to lower the price of prescription drugs,” said **Rep. Judy Chu** in an interview. [[12/13/19](#)]

COLORADO

Colorado Politics: “On Thursday, the U.S. House of Representatives passed by a vote of 230-192 the Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act... ‘If this legislation is passed, up to 300,000 Coloradans will pay one-third on their insulin medications from what they’re paying now,’ [**Rep. Jason Crow**] said on a conference call with reporters earlier in the week. ‘We also know that the 400,000 Coloradans who suffer from asthma are going to pay one-fifth of what they’re currently paying for drugs.’ He said that the rebate money would go toward innovation of new drugs.” [[12/12/19](#)]

FLORIDA

Florida Phoenix: “A landmark health care measure that promises to dramatically reduce the rising cost of prescription drugs and significantly expand access to health care benefits and services cleared the U.S. House last week... ‘This is a momentous day,’ Democratic **U.S. Rep. Donna Shalala** of Florida said during a news conference. She cast the bill as the latest in a line of progressive health reform laws, including Medicare, Medicaid, the Children’s Health Insurance Program, the Americans with Disabilities Act,

and the Affordable Care Act, calling it another ‘giant step’ in health care policy.”
[\[12/16/19\]](#)

ILLINOIS

Chicago Morning Star: “The Democrats of the US House have taken action against the out of control prices of drugs in the US... **Cheri Bustos**, a US Representative of Moline, said, ‘I am proud to support this bill to bring some relief to hardworking Illinois families and seniors.’ The bill will allow the government to negotiate the prices of 250 drugs per year. Bustos urged the Senate to take immediate action and lift this unfair burden for the US citizens.

“This new drug bill is named the Lower Drug Costs Act Now. The bill will empower the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate the prices of 250 drugs a year. **Jesus ‘Chuy’ Garcia**, a US Representative of Chicago, also supported the bill. Garcia said, ‘Too many families in my district are forced to choose between putting food on the table or paying for life-saving prescription drugs.’”

“If the bill gets passed from the Senate then the government will be able to negotiate with the drug companies directly for the first time in the history of the US. It will also help millions of seniors to get financial support. **Robin Kelly**, the US Representative of Matteson, said, ‘Too many Illinois families are forced to make the impossible decision between groceries and lifesaving medicines.’ She urged the Senate Majority Leader to take this measure immediately.”

“**Sean Casten**, the US Representative of Downers, said in a speech on the House floor that the prescription-drug costs were out of control. Casten added that this bill would change the lives of millions of people in the US. The Democrats are expecting that this bill would play a major role in their election campaign.”

WGIL: “A local Congresswoman says the House will vote Thursday on a measure that she says will lower prescription drug costs... 17th District Democrat **Cheri Bustos** says what’s called the ‘Lower Drug Costs Now Act’ should pass, which she says will be a good thing for her district. ‘We’ve got a mother in my congressional district. She has a daughter who is diabetic and obviously if you are diabetic you need — in the more severe cases — you need insulin to stay alive,’ Bustos said in a conference call Wednesday. ‘So, the cost for this family is \$230 a month after insurance. And so, literally, this is not a family that has a lot of needs.’” [\[12/12/19\]](#)

IOWA

WOWT: “We have people who literally are not taking their prescription medicines because they can’t afford them so they’re becoming less healthy. This taxes the entire

health care system. It's so important, not just for people's individual health, but for our entire economy when it comes to how much we spend on health care," **said Rep. Cindy Axne** in an interview. [12/13/19]

KANSAS

Kansas City Star Op-ed By Rep. Sharice Davids: "At a recent roundtable I held on the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs, a panelist and cancer survivor asked a simple question: Does anyone have \$13,000 to spend every month on prescription drugs? Not many Kansans I know do. Nor should they have to. Yet so many folks in our community know the pain of picking up medication they simply can't afford at the pharmacy counter. That's why I was proud to stand up to the big drug companies last week and vote to pass House Resolution 3, the Elijah Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act, to lower the cost of prescription drugs for families across Kansas' 3rd District." [12/15/19]

KENTUCKY

WFPL: "On Thursday, the U.S. House of Representatives is expected to vote on a massive bill that aims to lower the cost of prescription drugs for some Americans. But the Democrat-backed, partisan bill also has little chance of being taken up in the Senate. The legislation is supported by Louisville **Representative John Yarmuth**, who said on a press call that his constituents face increasing prices on prescription drugs... 'Drug pricing right now is increasing at a much higher rate than virtually any other aspect of health care; it's also constituting a much larger percentage of total healthcare costs,' Yarmuth said. 'So getting a handle on prescription drug prices is critical for not just our individual citizens welfare, but for the financial stability of Medicare, Medicaid and the government.'" [12/11/19]

MARYLAND

Maryland Matters: "The U.S. House passed a landmark health care measure Thursday that proponents say would dramatically reduce the rising cost of prescription drugs and significantly expand access to health care benefits and services... Democrats accused Trump — who pledged in 2016 to 'negotiate like crazy' for lower drug prices — of backpedaling on his campaign promise. 'Trump promised in 2016 he would work to lower drug prices,' [Majority Leader Steny] **Hoyer** (D-Md.) said on the floor Thursday. 'For that reason, he ought to support it.'" [12/12/19]

WFMD: "A bill which could lower drug prices for seniors is now before the US Senate... **Representative David Trone** (D-Md) of the 6th District issued a statement last week in support of this bill. 'Marylanders and Americans are being ripped off by the skyrocketing prices of prescription drugs, and it's time we put an end to this corrupt practice,' Trone said in his statement. 'This bill will save everyday Americans money and allow us to invest

in fighting the opioid epidemic and new innovative solutions at the [National Institutes of Health]. H.R. 3 finally puts American people ahead of the interests of big drug companies.” [\[12/13/12\]](#)

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston.com: “We have heard from so many of our constituents about what a high priority addressing the costs of prescription drugs is,” **Rep. Katherine Clark** told reporters in a conference call Thursday.”

“**Rep. Jim McGovern** calls the legislation a ‘once-in-a-generation bill’ that would have a dramatic effect on the cost of drugs like insulin, which doubled from 2012 to 2016 to an average annual cost of \$5,705 for someone with type 1 diabetes. According to McGovern, that person would spend 3.5 times less on insulin if H.R. 3 becomes law.”

“I hope and pray that it doesn’t die in Mitch McConnell’s graveyard over in the Senate and that he will take up either this bill or another bill,” McGovern said Thursday...”

“While the Trump administration contends that H.R. 3 would ‘affect as much as one third of drugs under development,’ [**Rep. Lori Trahan**] says she talked to ‘lots of pharmaceutical companies’ this year in anticipation of Democrats’ prescription drug bill and concluded they would have more than enough revenue left for innovation.

“**Rep. Bill Keating** noted that H.R. 3 also invests an additional \$10 billion for National Institutes of Health, bolstering public biomedical research that has spillover benefits for the private industry. ‘That money is often leveraged by drug companies, too — being able to take advantage of that research and build on it,’ Keating said.” [\[12/12/19\]](#)

MICHIGAN

Michigan Radio NPR: “A bill aimed at lowering drug prices and expanding benefits is heading for a vote in the U.S. House of Representatives Thursday... ‘Nearly 3 in 10 adults have reported not taking their medicines as prescribed due to the exorbitant costs,’ said Democratic **Representative Haley Stevens** (MI-11), a co-sponsor of the bill. ‘Patients in Michigan’s 11th District can pay up to \$583 for a monthly supply of insulin, compared to just \$28 in Australia,’ said Stevens. ‘That’s clearly preposterous, and it’s the cost of these drugs that are pushing people out of the middle class in a dangerous way.’”

“...According to Democratic **Representative Debbie Dingell** (MI-12), also a co-sponsor of the bill, independent experts have said the legislation would save American households \$120 billion, save private businesses more than \$40 billion, and save taxpayers about \$500 billion over ten years. ‘With \$500 billion in taxpayer savings, we will expand Medicare to cover dental, hearing and vision coverage,’ said Dingell. ‘We

will invest in finding new cures, and we will work to combat the addiction crisis.”
[[12/11/19](#)]

NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire Union Leader: “**U.S. Rep. Chris Pappas**, D-NH, predicted the U.S. House on Thursday will support legislation offering lower prescription drug costs that includes a provision he authored for low-income senior citizens... ‘When I travel around New Hampshire asking constituents what’s on their minds, there’s no topic more urgent or more personal than combating the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs,’ Pappas said. ‘I’ve heard from a senior who is unable to retire because his life is dependent on drugs that cost \$3,000 a month out of pocket. I’ve heard from a mother who shares a painful chronic condition with her daughter, and has to decide every month whose prescription to fill because she can’t fill both on her fixed income.’” [[12/11/19](#)]

NEW JERSEY

Burlington County Times: “The U.S. House of Representatives is expected to vote this week on sweeping legislation to bring down the cost of prescription drugs by allowing Medicare to negotiate prices... **Rep. Frank Pallone**, D-6 of Long Branch, and other members of New Jersey’s congressional delegation touted the additions to the bill Tuesday during a conference call with reporters... The bill also now incorporates previously separate measures penned by New Jersey Democrats, **Reps. Andy Kim, Mikie Sherrill and Donald Payne Jr.**, including Kim’s Helping Seniors Afford Health Care Act, which would allow more seniors to qualify for subsidies for Medicare premiums, copayments, deductibles and other health care expenses.”

“‘This will really help seniors struggling with health care costs,’ Kim said during Tuesday’s press call. ‘This is exactly what HR 3 is about ... helping folks get health care costs under control.’”

“Another \$10 billion of the projected savings will also be invested into the National Institute of Health to support scientific research related to antibiotic resistance, cancer and rare diseases. Sherrill, who authored the language, said the funding would allow medical research occurring in New Jersey to continue and ensure that medical and pharmaceutical science breakthroughs continue. ‘We’re still going to fuel the best research and development into drugs to make the world better,’ she said.”

“Payne’s addition to the bill would protect Medicare beneficiaries from surprise medical bills if polyps are removed during a screening colonoscopy. Doing so, is intended to encourage more seniors to undergo the screenings, which are often key to the early detection of colon cancer.” [[12/11/19](#)]

NJ Biz: “At a press conference on Tuesday, **U.S. Rep. Frank Pallone**, D-6th District, expanded on the merits of the bill, saying it is significant and would help not only seniors, but also everyone that is worried about the cost of prescriptions drugs. Pallone was joined by **U.S. Reps. Donald Payne, D-10th District; Andy Kim, D-3rd District; and Mikie Sherrill, D-11th District** ‘In order to make sure that the price is not higher than what is paid for in six other countries that are comparable to the U.S., we say that the price that is negotiated can’t be any more than 120 percent of the price that exists in those six countries,’ said Pallone.” [[12/11/19](#)]

New Jersey Star-Ledger: “Hours before the House voted on a measure allowing the federal government to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies to bring drug prices down, dozens of rookie Democrats joined **Speaker Nancy Pelosi** on the steps of the Capitol. The lawmakers there included New Jersey **Reps. Andy Kim**, R-3rd Dist., and **Rep. Tom Malinowski**, D-7th Dist. Both ousted Republican incumbents in 2018 after the House GOP voted to repeal the Affordable Care Act, which would have left 23 million more Americans without insurance and jeopardize coverage for pre-existing conditions. ‘The No. 1 issue I hear about is the cost of prescription drugs and health care,’ Kim said.” [[12/12/19](#)]

NEW MEXICO

The Albuquerque Journal: “‘New Mexico families shouldn’t have to choose between making ends meet and affording their prescriptions,’ [**Assistant Speaker Ben Ray Luján**] said in a statement after the House voted 230-192 to approve the bill.” [[12/12/19](#)]

NORTH CAROLINA

WRBL: “North Carolina **Congressman G.K. Butterfield** says getting this bill done is a priority for Democrats. ‘So that our seniors and everyday working families can afford their prescription drugs,’ says [**Rep.] Butterfield.**” [[12/12/19](#)]

PENNSYLVANIA

Times Leader: “The cost of prescription drugs has spiraled out of control, and it’s forcing many Americans to make difficult choices between paying for their medicine or other basic needs,” [**Rep. Matt] Cartwright** said. ‘This landmark legislation will help reduce the financial strain that big drug companies’ price-gouging practices have inflicted upon millions of Pennsylvania families. The Lower Drug Costs Now Act is a momentous step towards making health care more affordable in our state.’” [[12/14/19](#)]

RHODE ISLAND

Providence Journal: “‘It’s a transformational bill,’ [Rep. David] Cicilline said. ‘There is no more urgent issue... This is an issue that affects every single family in one way or another,’ said Cicilline. ‘This shouldn’t be controversial. This shouldn’t be a Democratic issue. This should be an issue everybody cares about.’” [12/11/19]

SOUTH CAROLINA

WTOC: “This is a bill that will significantly change people’s lives and save lives. This is one of the biggest issues that I hear about back home is the fact that, you know, the cost of prescription drugs keep rising, faster than inflation, faster than their salaries, and, you know, its consuming a lot of their income,” said Rep. Joe Cunningham in an interview. [12/13/19]

TEXAS

Fort Worth Star-Telegram: “‘North Texans are facing a crisis of skyrocketing prescription drug prices that are forcing them to choose between putting food on the table for their families or their life saving prescriptions,’ [Rep. Marc] Veasey said in a statement. ‘I am proud to take a stand to stop this crisis by passing this legislation that will lower the drug prices for the nearly 60,000 people enrolled in a Medicare Part D plan and over 285,00 people that enrolled in private health in Texas’ 33rd district.’” [12/12/19]

VIRGINIA

WRIC-TV: “It will fundamentally impact the lives of people I represent. Just recently, in central Virginia, we held a town hall event where we talked about the cost of prescription drugs and the impact that it has on our community... And I represent 96,000 individuals who are on Medicare Part D, and giving Medicare the power to negotiate its prescription drug pricing is huge; it will be substantial,” Rep. Abigail Spanberger said in an interview. [12/12/19]