

H.R. 987, The Strengthening Health Care and Lowering Prescription Drug Costs Act

As the Trump Administration continues its efforts to sabotage the Affordable Care Act, which would kick millions of Americans off of their insurance and remove patient protections, House Democrats are working to secure access to affordable health care and lower prescription drug costs as part of our For the People agenda. Last week, the House passed two bipartisan bills to begin to address the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs and one bill to protect health coverage for the 133 million Americans who have pre-existing conditions. This week, the House will take up H.R. 987, a package of seven bills that will protect and expand access to affordable health care and lower the cost of prescription drugs. Here's a look at the bills included in the package:

PROTECTING AND EXPANDING AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE

H.R. 987 includes four individual bills that protect and strengthen access to affordable, quality health coverage:

A ban on junk plans, introduced by Rep. Kathy Castor (FL-14): Rescinds the Trump Administration's guidance that expanded junk insurance plans, which do not provide Americans with the coverage they need. The Administration's guidance would raise the costs of comprehensive health coverage by driving up premiums for Americans who are older, sicker, or have pre-existing conditions.

The SAVE Act, introduced by Rep. Andy Kim (NJ-03): Provides states with funding to establish state-based insurance marketplaces, which would increase access to health coverage and lower health care costs.

The ENROLL Act, introduced by Rep. Kathy Castor (FL-14): Provides funding for the navigator program for the federally-facilitated Marketplace (FFM). Navigators assist Americans with finding the coverage that is right for them and their families during the open enrollment season.

The MORE Health Education Act, introduced by Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester (DE-AL): Requires the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to conduct consumer outreach and enrollment education activities, which ensure that Americans know when the open enrollment period is taking place and how to find the right plan to fit their needs.

LOWERING THE COST OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

H.R. 987 also includes three bills that address the rising cost of prescription drugs by increasing the availability of generic drugs:

The CREATES Act of 2019, introduced by Rep. David Cicilline (RI-01): Establishes a process to deter gaming of safety protocols that brand manufacturers use to delay or impede generic entry.

The Protecting Consumer Access to Generic Drugs Act, introduced by Rep. Bobby Rush (IL-01): Makes it illegal for prescription drug manufacturers to use a practice known as "pay-for-delay," in which brand name drug companies pay generic manufacturers to delay bringing cheaper drugs to market.

The BLOCKING Act, introduced by Rep. Kurt Schrader (OR-05): Removes a stalling tactic that prescription drug manufacturers use to block access to market for generic prescription drugs.