

Murphy Casts Vote to Enable Medicare to Cut Prescription Drug Costs for Seniors

Today, Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) voted to cut the cost of health care and improve access to prescription drugs by requiring the federal government to negotiate with drug companies for lower drug prices for Medicare beneficiaries.

Contact: Kristen Bossi
(202) 225-4476

Washington, DC -- Today, Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) voted to cut the cost of health care and improve access to prescription drugs by requiring the federal government to negotiate with drug companies for lower drug prices for Medicare beneficiaries. The House of Representatives passed the bill, which is the first step to fixing the Medicare Part D program, by a vote of 255-170.

"When Congress wrote the Medicare prescription drug plan, it included a provision explicitly prohibiting the federal government from negotiating for lower drug prices at the behest of special interests. As the cost of the program skyrocketed, as premiums increased, and as doughnut holes expanded, seniors suffered as drug companies prospered. Today, we are righting that wrong and putting seniors and taxpayers first," said Murphy.

Currently, the only entity in this country that cannot bargain for lower group drug prices is Medicare. This bill provides Medicare broad discretion on how to best implement the negotiating authority and achieve price discounts for Medicare beneficiaries.

A Families USA study shows that, over a 6-month period, the median drug price increase among Medicare drug plans for the top 20 drugs prescribed for seniors was 3.7 percent – which translates into a 7.4 percent increase over a year, more than twice the rate of overall inflation. As the study concludes, "The Medicare drug plans are not containing drug price inflation."

"My presence here today is a living example of this popular discontent with the Medicare drug program. And even if this bill doesn't fix the Medicare drug program overnight, it is an unmistakable signal to the people I represent back home that this House is no longer a place where industry can profit off desperately necessary social programs. Today, we broke the symbolic hold of special interests over federal health policy," said Murphy.