

Budget Committee Member Day
Michael C. Burgess, M.D. Statement
February 27th, 2020

Chairman Yarmuth and Ranking Member Womack, thank you for the opportunity present priorities for the fiscal year 2021 budget. Today, I will discuss health care, technological advancements and deployment, and energy solutions.

Americans care about how much they spend on prescription drugs, often worrying about their ability for afford the medications they need. Some patients ration their insulin while others choose between medication and food.

There is bipartisan consensus that Congress needs to act to bring down prescription drug costs. We have considered Medicare Part D Reform, including capping senior's out-of-pocket costs. Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means put out a bipartisan request for information receiving more than 80 responses. Unfortunately, these conversations were sidelined while our attention was wrapped up in H.R. 3.

I urge my fellow members to consider the provisions included in H.R. 19, the Lower Costs, More Cures Act of 2019. This bill includes bipartisan proposals to lower drugs costs while protecting access to new treatments and cures. H.R. 19 caps out-of-pocket costs in Medicare Part D, protecting seniors from the high cost of prescription drugs at \$3,100 per year, and caps the cost of insulin at \$50 per month.

H.R. 19 also contains provisions aimed at access to prescription drugs in rural areas by reforming Direct and Indirect Remuneration fees.

There is a lot that Congress can be doing on the cost of drugs to deliver to the American people. H.R. 19 is a great example of bipartisan policies that can become law and directly impact the drug costs that patients incur. The provisions I mentioned today are just some of the commonsense and bipartisan solutions that should be considered.

The FY2021 budget should include funding to ensure United States preeminence in fifth generation mobile technology. 5G will require rural broadband deployment and a trained workforce to install the necessary infrastructure. In addition, the National Institute of Standards and Technology must have the resources to contribute to global 5G standards and the National Telecommunication and Information Agency must manage federal spectrum. This includes working with the FCC and industry to auction spectrum while protecting incumbents.

Additionally, consumers are concerned about their data privacy. The Energy and Commerce Committee is currently negotiating a federal privacy law that will require oversight of the Federal Trade Commission to ensure industry does not engage in deceptive practices when implementing privacy policies. The FTC will require technically trained personnel to fulfill this responsibility.

Another technology, autonomous vehicles, will improve mobility and increase safety on our roadways. We should

prioritize funding for the National Highway Transportation Safety Agency to certify the safety features of these vehicles and allow testing exemptions while also issuing recalls where necessary. This includes expertise within the Office of Defects Investigations and a consumer facing education campaign on recall completion. The traveling public deserves adequate resources to ensure their safety.

The President's budget funds important energy research projects, such as the Versatile Test Reactor, the Energy Storage Grand Challenge, and artificial intelligence capabilities. These smart investments in nuclear power, energy storage, and advanced computing will ensure energy independence and conservation for our future.

Congress must consider resources for energy efficiency, including programs like Energy Star. This has saved Americans billions of dollars and must be preserved to ensure consumers make informed energy decisions.

Congress must also address America's aging energy infrastructure. The needs of tomorrow demand the expansion, protection, and inspection of our nation's pipelines and electric grids. Federal funds must be properly allocated to streamline the construction of new projects and protect existing infrastructure from physical and cyber threats.

I appreciate the committee's consideration of these priorities.