

## **Congressman Eliot L. Engel's Opening Remarks**

### **House Committee on Energy and Commerce**

#### **Health Subcommittee Hearing**

**May 9, 2019**

Thank you Madame Chairwoman Eshoo for holding today's important hearing on the prescription drug supply chain. Everyday, my constituents tell me that the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs is becoming unbearable. I have heard too many stories of hard-working New York families that have had to make the unimaginable decision between purchasing groceries or filling a life-saving prescription for their child.

On top of that, I find it absurd that our nation—the wealthiest in the world—pays more for the same drugs than our peer countries. Take insulin for example, a drug which seven million Americans rely on to manage and control their diabetes. A box of insulin pens costing around \$700 in the United States reportedly costs \$73 in Germany and even less in Israel at \$57.

Other developed nations are able to achieve these savings because they are not afraid to leverage the purchasing power of their national insurance programs.

As Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, I travel all over the world and meet with leaders from every corner of the globe. Even though these countries negotiate drug prices, they still have access to the same life-saving medications as Americans.

As we begin the next phase of our drug pricing work, I encourage my colleagues, on both sides of the aisle, to work on commonsense legislation which would repeal the so-called 'non-interference clause' in the 2003 Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act.

This horrendous policy, which I voted against, prevents Medicare from leveraging its purchasing power to lower the cost of life-saving drugs.

Empowering Medicare to do so would bring immediate relief to my constituents.