

**Opening Statement of The Honorable Brett Guthrie**  
**“The Future of Biomedicine: Translating Biomedical Research into  
Personalized Health Care”**

**December 8, 2021**

*As Prepared for Delivery*

Thank you, Chair Eshoo for holding this hearing.

Today we are discussing ways to promote and advance American biomedical innovation. I thank the Chair for holding this hearing, and I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about how health care delivery could be transformed through data generation and innovative technologies.

However, we **cannot** talk about advancing health care innovation without addressing the harmful drug pricing provisions in the Democrats’ reckless tax and spending spree bill that will ultimately restrict patient access to timely care and lead to less cures.

This past year several indicators have shown that the Biden Administration is moving our country in the wrong direction. We are facing the highest levels of drug overdoses in our nation’s history in part because of the influx of deadly drugs, including fentanyl, exacerbated by the Biden Administration’s

failure to secure our Southern Border. Additionally, Americans are experiencing the highest levels of inflation in over thirty years, leading to the most expensive Thanksgiving holiday most have seen.

Despite all of this, the White House and Democrats in Congress continue to ignore these flashing red lights and are downplaying the true risks that increasing federal spending will have on American households. Even the former Chair of the White House Council of Economic Advisors in the Obama Administration is sounding the alarm bells on inflation by stating that Biden Administration officials are “systematically underestimating inflation” and further saying “they poured kerosine on the fire” after signing the massive \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act into law.

The Democrats’ most recent and overreaching partisan effort would force drug manufacturers to accept a government-mandated price of a drug, or potentially face up to a 95% excise tax for refusing to accept the government’s bad deal. Make no mistake: This isn’t a ‘negotiation.’ This is government price setting.

The University of Chicago published an issue brief last week on the impact of the reckless tax and spending spree bill on biopharmaceutical innovation and

patient health. The studies in the summary brief found the drug pricing provisions would lead to a decrease in research and development investments **by over \$660 billion through 2039, resulting in 135 fewer drugs brought to market** during this time. Most consequentially, they found it **could lead to the loss of approximately 331 million life years** – which is thirty-one times higher than the loss of life due to COVID-19.

Most Americans are against this. A survey from the Kaiser Family Foundation found that 72% of Americans oppose government drug price negotiations, if it leads to fewer medications being developed in the future.

The Democrats' bill punishes our innovators and undermines the significant strides of this committee, Operation Warp Speed under President Trump's leadership, and others have made throughout the pandemic to get needed treatments to health care settings as quickly and as safely as possible.

The good news is there are existing bipartisan proposals introduced by members of this Committee to address the rising costs of prescription medications for patients without harming innovation.

H.R. 19, the Lower Costs, More Cures Act, includes forty bipartisan proposals that would bring needed market-based reforms like addressing pay-for-delay tactics in order to lower the costs of prescription medications without threatening the development of future cures. H.R. 19 would specifically give seniors relief by capping their annual out-of-pocket spending and reducing the costs of insulin for seniors by capping monthly insulin costs once deductibles are met. In fact, BBB does have some of these proposals from H.R. 19, which shows that there are areas of agreement on how to lower drug costs for Americans. Where we don't - and where we will never agree - is on the idea that forcing companies to accept whatever price the government feels like paying for prescription medications is the correct way to lower the costs of prescription medications.

I'm deeply concerned about the estimated loss of more than 100 new cures if BBB is signed into law and hope this bill ultimately fails. Moving forward, I encourage my colleagues to work with me on bipartisan reforms to lower drug prices and find solutions that prioritize getting more affordable treatments to market for patients living with life-threatening and debilitating diseases like ALS and other neurodegenerative diseases. Doing so can improve the quality of life for millions across the country.

Thank you, and I yield back my time.