

Chair Cummings, Ranking Member Jordan, members of the committee — thank you for having me here today to share my story.

My name is Ashley Krege. I am 35 years old and I live in Houston, TX.

I am one of the thousands of Americans who took the world's top-selling drug, Humira.^{1,2}

I took Humira to treat a chronic autoimmune condition called psoriasis, which causes pain and inflammation.

After finally getting approval for the drug, I had to pay \$753 a month.

To say this was a financial hardship would be an understatement. The drug costs more than my car payment. More than my business insurance. More than my food bill each month. But I made the decision to suck it up and pay because the drug worked.

But after months of successful pain and symptom management on Humira, I was informed that the drug maker, AbbVie, raised the price. My new monthly payment was going to be almost \$1,100 a month.

I simply could not afford it any longer. I had to make the difficult decision to wean myself off the drug that had provided me months of relief. It was already too expensive for me at \$750 per month. I couldn't afford the 40% price hike.

Let me tell you a little bit about Humira. The drug is far from new — it's been on the market since 2002.³ And the price has gone up nearly 400 percent — to \$5,174 per month.⁴

AbbVie is making billions on the backs of patients. \$20 billion alone in global sales last year.⁵ That's more revenue than *every NFL team...combined*.⁶

¹ <https://www.humira.com/psoriasis/humira-history>

² <https://www.biospace.com/article/abbvie-s-humira-remains-the-top-selling-prescription-for-2018/>

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16439435>

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<http://www.fdbhealth.com/policies/drug-pricing-policy/>

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<https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1551152/000155115219000004/abbv-20181231xexhibit991.htm>

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<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2018-09-13/nfl-makes-more-money-than-ever-and-things-have-never-been-worse>

And AbbVie has done everything in its power to block competition and keep cheaper generics off the U.S. market.⁷

They've struck deals with more than a dozen companies that tried to develop biosimilars. They've filed 247 patent applications in order to delay competition in the U.S. for decades.⁸

But while AbbVie was hiking prices and blocking competition in the US, a biosimilar came to market in Europe. As a result, AbbVie began selling Humira for 80% less overseas.⁹

Unfortunately, that's not the end of my story. I had a similar experience on Enbrel, another drug examined by your investigation. Price hikes again led to unaffordability, and I stopped taking the drug.

As a result, my symptoms came back. To give you an idea of what a full-body psoriatic flare-up feels like: imagine getting a terrible sunburn, the kind that makes your entire body feverish. Then add falling into a bed of fire ants. That is what it feels like during a flare without medication.

And that's why I'm here today.

Because there are two bills in the House of Representatives that would help patients like me.

HR. 1499 and HR. 2296 have both passed the Energy and Commerce Committee. The first bill would stop brand name drug companies like AbbVie from paying off generic companies that plan to bring a competitor to market. In exchange for this payment the generic manufacturer often delays its product's entry into the market. And patients like me are stuck facing bills of \$1,100 per month for Humira.

The second bill, called the FAIR Drug Pricing Act, would increase transparency and require justification for price hikes like the ones AbbVie enjoys taking on the backs of patients like me.

These bills are just a start. They would not solve all the problems in our drug pricing system or end all the ways that drug companies abuse their monopolies.

⁷ <https://www.modernhealthcare.com/politics-policy/abbvie-sued-over-humira-patent-thicket>

⁸ http://www.i-mak.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/i-mak.humira.report.final_.0917.pdf

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<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-abbvie-results-humira/humira-biosimilars-available-at-up-to-80-percent-discount-in-europe-abbvie-idUSKCN1N71NZ?il=0>

Americans like me are desperate for relief from our high-cost prescription drugs, and you have the opportunity to advance legislation that curbs two of pharma's most egregious practices.

I hope today's hearing isn't the last step.

Thank you for your time today.