

**Written Statement of
Social Security Works
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*U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Hearing On "Negotiating A Better Deal: Legislation to Lower the Cost of Prescription Drugs"
May 4, 2021*

Social Security Works, with its over 2 million supporters, is committed to protecting and improving the economic security of disadvantaged and at-risk populations, particularly seniors and people with disabilities. For these vulnerable constituencies and for nearly every American, prescription drug prices are too high. While prescription drug pricing is complex, the foundational problem lies with the pharmaceutical industry, which unapologetically prioritizes profits over public health. As the House Committee on Energy and Commerce examines options to lower the cost of prescription drugs, Social Security Works encourages Congress to introduce policy reforms that boldly transform the pharmaceutical industry, uproot its monopoly structure, demonstrate an unwavering commitment to public health, and result in all Americans having access to affordable prescription drugs.

The United States spends [over \\$10,000 per person](#) on health care; that's [more per capita than any other country](#) in the world. Each year brings new headlines highlighting [hikes in prescription drug prices](#). Prescription drug prices are one of the largest drivers of our country's increasing health care costs. There are a wide range of legislative improvements that could bring down spending on medicines. Some of the strongest proposals are built on the foundation that the government should negotiate prescription drug prices on behalf of beneficiaries. Negotiation is an important first step to Congress implementing transformative legislation.

In 2019, Social Security Works strongly endorsed H.R. 3, the Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act. Below is the endorsement letter Social Security Works sent to Congress in support of this legislation. Social Security Works remains supportive of H.R. 3 and urges Congress to pass H.R. 3 as part of the Build Back Better plan. This legislation is an essential part of any plan that wants to invest in the infrastructure of the American people.

Pharmaceutical corporations will continue to raise prices, denying needed medications to Americans across the country, unless Congress reins in the pharmaceutical industry. The government must use its own resources and investments to create true innovation and competition. [Americans across the political spectrum overwhelmingly want Congress to take action](#) to lower prescription drug prices. Inaction only guarantees higher prices for patients while pharmaceutical CEOs continue to pad their wallets. Action to lower prescription drug prices will finally force the pharmaceutical industry to put patients over profits and make medicines affordable for all.



December 5, 2019

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard Neal
Chairman, House Ways & Means Committee
2309 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman, House Committee on Energy &
Commerce
2107 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Chairman, House Committee on Education & Labor
1201 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Chairman Pallone, Chairman Neal, and Chairman Scott:

On behalf of the over 1.5 million Social Security Works supporters, we are writing to express our enthusiastic support for H.R. 3, the Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act of 2019. We strongly encourage every member of the House of Representatives to vote 'yes' on this important piece of legislation.

We are thrilled that H.R. 3 takes a bold first step toward lowering high prescription drug prices for all Americans and we look forward to continued improvements as this bill moves through the legislative process. Your work on this issue is crucially important. We thank you and hope that the Senate will follow your leadership by sending H.R. 3 to the President's desk to become law.

The high price of prescription drugs continues to be a top concern for people across the political spectrum. [September 2019 polling](#) confirms that people want to see leaders take bold action to lower prices. More recently, [November 2019 polling by Data for Progress](#) reveals that voters, even after being presented with industry arguments against pharmaceutical reform, overwhelmingly support leaders who vote for the types of reforms contained in H.R. 3 – including capping the costs of prescription drugs, allowing Medicare to negotiate the price of drugs, and invoking new fines and fees on pharmaceutical corporations that raise their prices too high. The Lower Drug Costs Now Act is evidence that Congress is ready to reflect the will of the people and hold pharmaceutical corporations accountable for their unjust practices that maintain high prices.

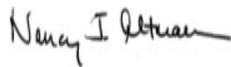
As the House considers amendments to this legislation, we encourage members to consider adding proposals that further expand savings for Americans. We believe that expanding the number of drugs negotiated by Medicare, preventing price spikes, eliminating the Medicare Part D non-interference clause and extending negotiated fair prices to those without insurance would greatly improve the impact of H.R. 3. We also strongly encourage any savings from H.R. 3 be dedicated to expanding Medicare, particularly

the inclusion of hearing, dental, and vision coverage. This addition would be lifechanging for so many seniors and people with disabilities.

Now is the time for reform that lowers prescription drug prices. The Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act of 2019 will help millions of Americans be better able to afford their prescribed medications. The introduction of H.R. 3 instantly sparked a well-funded campaign by the pharmaceutical industry to stop the initiative in its tracks, which means that Congress is headed in exactly the right direction to support patients before the profits of pharmaceutical corporations.

Thank you for your leadership to lower prescription drug prices and ensure that Americans receive the relief they deserve. We look forward to working with you to get H.R. 3 signed into law and as you continue to work toward even bolder and more transformative policy solutions.

Sincerely,



Nancy J. Altman
President



Alex Lawson
Executive Director