

**OPENING STATEMENT FOR THE HONORABLE BRETT GUTHRIE
REPUBLICAN LEADER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH
May 4, 2021**

**The hearing on, “Negotiating A Better Deal: Legislation to Lower the
Cost of Prescription Drugs”**

As Prepared for Delivery

Chair Eshoo, thank you for holding this important hearing today.

I am very concerned about the disastrous consequences of Speaker Pelosi’s partisan drug pricing bill, H.R. 3, that is before us today. There is no doubt that Congress must do something to lower prescription drug prices. We know the American people want lower prices, but they do not want to sacrifice access to life changing treatment. H.R. 19, the Lower Costs, More Cures Act, that I helped introduce would lower prescription drug costs while protecting innovation for new cures. We also know the American people do not want their Medicare taxes and premiums they pay diverted to liberal pet programs, which I am afraid is the direction H.R. 3 is headed. Speaker Pelosi’s bill brings us one step closer to single payer health care systems. Supporters of single payer often cite other health care systems around the world as examples that the U.S. should follow. However, I believe single payer health care systems are a very dangerous idea.

In the United States, we have access to cutting edge innovative drugs and the brilliant scientists and companies who develop them. The key word here is access. Under H.R. 3, we would be forced to sacrifice this access for more bureaucracy

and fewer cures. A partial estimate from the CBO said H.R. 3 would result in 15 fewer new drugs developed, and the White House Council of Economic Advisers under the Trump administration estimated up to 100 fewer drugs.

Two years ago, when we first examined H.R. 3, a colleague across the aisle said in our hearing that he was willing to forfeit the CBO estimated cures that would not be developed due to government price setting. I challenge my colleagues across the aisle, would you still agree with this statement knowing that one such forfeiture could have been the COVID-19 vaccine?

Last week, the White House announced that 100 million Americans — almost 40% of U.S. adults — have now been fully vaccinated against Covid-19. and 55% of U.S. adults have received at least their first shot. America is in a very different spot than our allies in Europe, who due to their single payer systems, prioritized price over vaccine R&D and innovation.

Thanks to President Trump, America took a very different approach than our European allies. Through Operation Warp Speed, we partnered with private industry and invested in research and development. We have the results to our approach to prove it: 3 safe and effective vaccines rolled out in record time. These vaccines have allowed our country to open and move forward. H.R. 3 disincentivizes research and development and had it been in place last year, would

have led to a worse outcome for all Americans in the fight against COVID-19 and the race to a viable vaccine.

There are bipartisan solutions to lower drug prices, including H.R. 19, the Lower Costs, More Cures Act that will level the playing the field for American consumers while still allowing for the vital innovation Americans depend on. Just last week, Biden said in his joint address, and I quote, “Now, if Congress won’t pass my plan – let’s at least pass what we agree on.” I think this is exactly what the American people want us to do. There is room for bipartisan action to lower drug prices. . I am particularly interested in value-based agreements and Medicare Part D reform. These two areas have strong bipartisan support and would positively impact the lives of millions of Americans.

I would like to yield my remaining time to Dr. Burgess.