



COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION & LABOR
REPUBLICANS

COMMITTEE
STATEMENT

**Opening Statement of Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Republican Leader
Committee on Education and Labor
Markup of H.R. 3, *Lower Drug Costs Now Act of 2019*
October 17, 2019**

(As prepared for delivery)

“Before I begin, I want to take a moment to recognize Rep. Elijah Cummings. As someone who served with him on the Oversight and Reform Committee, I’m well aware of his passion for public service. My thoughts and prayers are with his family.

Workers and families across America are rightly concerned about the costs of their prescription drugs. In fact, one in four Americans worries about affording medication. Stories about prescription drug costs skyrocketing by over 400 percent are maddening and frustrating. It is no surprise that 70 percent of Americans consider this a ‘top priority’ and want Congress to tackle prescription drug costs.

This is a serious problem that requires a serious approach by Congress.

That is why Congressional efforts to bring down drug costs for the American people have been, and should continue to be, a collaborative and bipartisan effort.

Under Republican leadership in previous years, Members of Congress worked in a bipartisan fashion to make real progress on this problem.

This year, House and Senate Committees have continued working together on bipartisan bills to address the high cost and increase price transparency of prescription drugs. Two of these bills have become law, and others are awaiting further action in both chambers.

But just last month, Speaker Pelosi sabotaged those previous bipartisan efforts by introducing H.R. 3, a radical drug-pricing scheme without Member input or the collaborative Committee process. H.R. 3 is nothing more than a down payment on Medicare for All, a government-run health care system that would eliminate private insurance, including employer-sponsored coverage. Medicare for All would force seniors into a one-size-fits-all plan along with everyone else and end popular Medicare Advantage plans. Over half the Democrat Conference supports this radical proposal.

Sadly, H.R. 3 is just the latest in a string of extreme socialist policies championed by Congressional Democrats.

Specifically, the Speaker's drug scheme would upend our market-based system by nationalizing the prescription-drug industry through foreign-price controls, retroactive tax penalties, arbitrary inflation caps, and federally-mandated 'negotiations.'

Let's be clear, governments don't negotiate, they dictate. The radical approach taken by H.R. 3 jeopardizes innovation and investment. Just look at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries for proof. European companies invested 24 percent more on prescription drug research and development than U.S.-based companies before certain European OECD countries implemented the same types of price controls included in Pelosi's legislation. By 2015, after adhering to government price controls instead of relying on competition, European-based companies in those countries had fallen behind their U.S. counterparts by 40 percent.

Speaker Pelosi's scheme could also jeopardize U.S. patients' access to new and innovative medicines and cures. According to research published last year, American patients have greater access to life-saving treatments that combat cancer and other deadly diseases than citizens of other countries. It stated, 'nearly 90 percent of newly launched medicines from 2011 to 2017 were available in the U.S. compared to just two-thirds in the United Kingdom, half in Canada and France, and one-third in Australia.'

House Democrats are so committed to this extreme plan that they rushed a CBO score that provides less than a full picture of the costs of this ill-advised

legislation; and are intent on ramming this legislation through the House before the full implications are known or carefully considered.

Today's markup is another example of the Committee's focus on radical socialist priorities including one-size-fits-all mandated minimum wage hikes, trial-lawyer rewards, taxpayer-funded pension bailouts, and heavy-handed government intervention targeting small businesses.

We shouldn't be pursuing policies that will harm the health and well-being of American patients. And we shouldn't destroy a system that allows the U.S. to lead the world in new cures and treatments.

Republicans stand ready to work with Democrats to push for legislation that promotes competition, lowers out-of-pocket costs for consumers, and establishes transparency and accountability in drug pricing."

###