

U.S. Rep. Pocan: Introduces legislation to protect Americans from prescription drug price gouging

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WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Representatives Mark Pocan (WI-02) and Marcy Kaptur (OH-09) today introduced legislation that would penalize pharmaceutical companies that engage in price gouging without cause, leading to price spikes for patients who rely on medication to treat diseases ranging from cancer to addiction. The Stop Price Gouging Act, would hold drug companies accountable for large price increases and result in billions of dollars in savings for taxpayers. U.S. Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) are introducing companion legislation in the Senate.

The Stop Price Gouging Act would:

- Require drug companies to report increases in drug prices, and justify the increase.
- Penalize drug companies that engage in unjustified price increases with financial penalties proportionate to the price spike.

“Despite President Trump claiming victory on declining prescription drug prices, the costs of many drugs are still skyrocketing and becoming increasingly unaffordable for millions of Americans,” said Pocan. “The Stop Price Gouging Act will hold corporations accountable and protect consumers from egregious year-after-year price spikes that are far too common. While American families struggle over whether to pay an electric bill or buy life-saving medications, drug manufacturers and CEOs should not be making excessive profits. Members of Congress should

immediately support this legislation and deliver results for the American people who are being hit with outrageous drug prices daily.”

“We must stand up to pharmaceutical companies that are more worried about lining their own pockets and bolstering profits for Wall Street investors than making sure patients can access the life-saving medications they produce,” said Kaptur. “As policymakers, we must shine a light on price gouging. The predatory pricing practice must stop. The health and well-being of millions of Americans depends on it.”

“The purpose of medicine is to help people, not to line the pockets of Big Pharma executives. Too many hardworking Americans still struggle to afford the medicine they need, and often, the culprit is price gouging by big pharmaceutical corporations. It has to stop. The Stop Price Gouging Act would protect Ohioans from prescription drug price spikes by requiring drug companies to report and justify their decisions to increase prices and prevent big pharma from price gouging,” said Brown.

“Too many New Yorkers are suffering because drug companies care more about their own profits than whether sick patients have access to medicine. That is one of the root causes of our country’s skyrocketing prescription drug costs, and Congress needs to step in and solve this problem now,” said Gillibrand. “This urgently needed legislation would finally hold companies accountable and penalize them when they gouge the price of a prescription drug without cause. I am proud to introduce this bill, and I urge my colleagues to join me in fighting to pass it.”

Under current law, pharmaceutical corporations can increase the price of their products without justification. Pocan and Kaptur [introduced this bill](#) last Congress and said they would continue fighting to pass it this session of Congress. Any revenues collected through the Stop Price Gouging Act would be reinvested in future drug research and development at the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

In 2018, Americans spent an all-time high of [\\$360 billion on prescription drugs](#). Nearly one-third of Americans polled by [Consumer Reports](#) said they had experienced a drug price hike in the past year, shelling out a total of \$2 billion more for a drug they routinely take. Their 2016 [survey revealed](#) that 30 percent of Americans who experienced a hike in the price of one or more of their medications in the past year left a prescription unfilled because it was too expensive; 15 percent said they cut pills in half to make them last longer.