

U.S. Rep. Ron Kind: Way and Means Committee pass landmark legislation to lower the cost of prescription drugs

Posted on Wednesday, Oct 23, 2019

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Washington, DC - Late last night, the **House Committee on Ways and Means** passed the *Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act*, legislation that would lower prescription drug prices and level the playing field for American patients and taxpayers. Last week, the Committee held a hearing on the legislation, where **Rep. Ron Kind** [spoke](#) to urge his colleagues to support the legislation that would allow Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices—a main pillar of his [Drug Pricing Action Plan](#).

“Right now, ninety percent of seniors and about half of all Americans take a prescription drug, and folks in Wisconsin often pay more than people in other countries for the exact same drug. This legislation will finally level the playing field for working families who currently have to choose between paying for food and rent or the prescription drugs they need to survive,” said **Rep. Ron Kind**. “Now, we are one step closer to bringing much-needed relief to thousands of Wisconsinites and millions of Americans.”

The *Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act*:

- Gives Medicare the power to negotiate directly with the drug companies and creates powerful new tools to force drug companies to the table to agree to real price reductions, while ensuring seniors never lose access to the

prescriptions they need.

- Makes the lower drug prices negotiated by Medicare available to Americans with private insurance, not just Medicare beneficiaries.
- Limits the maximum price for any negotiated drug to be in line with the average price in countries like ours, where drug companies charge less for the same drugs.
- Creates a new, \$2,000 out-of-pocket limit on prescription drug costs for Medicare beneficiaries, and reverses years of unfair price hikes above inflation across thousands of drugs in Medicare.

“We thank Congressman Kind for joining AARP in support of this important legislation,” said **Lisa Lamkins, AARP Wisconsin Associate State Director for Advocacy**. “The *Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act* will help more Americans afford access to the prescription drugs that they need to get and stay healthy. We need immediate action to lower drug prices, especially to provide relief for older adults who are particularly hurt by outrageously high prices.”

The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office [found](#) that drug negotiations alone from this legislation will **save taxpayers \$345 billion** in Medicare Part D spending over 2023-2029.

Also included in this legislation, is Rep. Kind’s *Better Transparency in Information for Medicare Beneficiaries Act of 2019*, which will increase transparency by providing notice to seniors when less expensive Medicare prescription drug plans are available to them and was [introduced](#) earlier this month.

The Ways and Means Committee is the most powerful – and the oldest – committee in the House of Representatives. It has jurisdiction over tax measures, the management of public debt, trade and tariff laws, Social Security, Medicare, pensions, and many other economic growth measures.