

# U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Introduces legislation to make prescription drugs more affordable for seniors on Medicare

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*Bill would lower costs and put people over Big Pharma profits*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin, a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, introduced legislation with Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) to make prescription drugs more affordable for seniors on Medicare.

The *Medicare Negotiation and Competitive Licensing Act* would authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to negotiate drug prices and, if drug companies refuse to negotiate in good faith, to enable the Secretary to issue a competitive, compulsory license to another company that is willing and able to produce the medication as a generic. The bill is being introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressman Lloyd Doggett (D-TX), Peter Welch (D-VT) and Elijah Cummings (D-MD).

“We have a broken system in Washington that prohibits the federal government from negotiating lower prescription drug prices for older Wisconsinites,” **said Senator Baldwin**. “We need to fix this and provide seniors a better deal on prescription drug costs. Let’s allow the government to negotiate directly with drug

companies so we can lower costs for seniors and save taxpayers money.”

“The purpose of medicine is to help people, not to line the pockets of Big Pharma executives. Our bill would call Big Pharma’s bluff and demand prescription drug companies offer fair prices, or be boxed out,” **said Senator Brown.**

“Medicare is one of the largest drug purchasers in the country. It should not be restricted from negotiating the best deal with drug manufacturers,” **said Senator Klobuchar.** “Americans deserve better. I have fought for years to unleash the bargaining power of seniors on Medicare and this bill offers another important step towards lowering the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs.”

American patients are burdened by high drug prices, as these same patients’ tax dollars go into protecting government-approved, government-funded monopolies. The top health care concern for Americans is skyrocketing prescription drug prices. It is past time for a patient-first plan to lower them.

Big pharmaceutical companies often use scare tactics in order to maintain the highest profits of any industry. Prescription drug companies have previously made threats against negotiations bills, stating that if they were forced to negotiate more competitive prices, they would simply refuse to sell its drugs to people on Medicare. The *Medicare Negotiation and Competitive Licensing Act* stipulates that if pharmaceutical companies refuse to agree to a reasonable price on a given medication, the Secretary of HHS could issue this competitive, compulsory license to another company that will offer the drug at a price that’s fair to Medicare beneficiaries and taxpayers.

In 2018, Americans spent an all-time high of [\\$360 billion on prescription drugs](#). According to a 2016 Consumer Reports [survey](#), 30 percent of Americans who experienced an increase in the price of one or more of their medications left a prescription unfilled because it was too expensive; 15 percent said they cut pills in half to make them last longer.

The full legislation is available [here](#).

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