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March 10, 2026

Written Testimony in Support of Maryland House Bill 1134 Pharmaceutical Drugs and Devices – Gifts to Health Professionals – Prohibition

Public Citizen, a national nonprofit consumer advocacy organization with more than 1 million members, supports HB 1134 and urges that it be approved and enacted into law.

For years, it has been well known that gifts to health professionals are associated with prescribing decisions and that gifts can influence physician behavior. Even small gifts can be associated with the prescribing of a brand name drug that is being promoted.^{1,2}

Industry gifts to physicians are not a charitable act. Pharmaceutical companies are investor-owned businesses that seek to maximize their profits, and they provide gifts with the expectation of high returns.

The public interest in Maryland would be best served by prohibiting these gifts. Health professionals should make prescribing decisions that are in the best interests of patients, not of pharmaceutical companies or other medical businesses.

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¹ Steinbrook R. Physician-industry relations — will fewer gifts make a difference? *N Engl J Med* 2009;360(6):557-559.

² Steinbrook R. Physicians, industry payments for food and beverages, and drug prescribing. *JAMA* 2017;317(17):1753-1754