

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives

October 20, 2021

Dear Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi,

We write to you with growing concern over reporting that congressional leadership is considering excluding or significantly weakening drug price negotiation policy in the Build Back Better Act, due to pressure from members of Congress out of step with the needs and demands of the American people.<sup>1</sup>

Drug price negotiation has repeatedly polled as one of, and often *the* most popular single policy in the entire Build Back Better Act and Biden agenda.<sup>2</sup> That extraordinary support holds even after voters are presented with talking points from prescription drug corporations opposing price negotiations, including 95% of Democrats and more than 8-in-10 adults generally.<sup>3</sup>

We recognize that Medicare drug price negotiation has been a longstanding priority for you both, Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi.<sup>4</sup> Yet certain isolated members of Congress would rather leave your promises unfulfilled, prioritizing drug corporations' ongoing ability to price gouge and charge United States consumers 3-4 times prices paid in other wealthy countries for prescription drugs over staying true to commitments and helping patients who are struggling to afford medicines. Some have proposed changes that would render drug price negotiations virtually meaningless, by excluding patented drugs from negotiations and removing the excise tax penalty to enforce drug corporation engagement in negotiations.

Patented, brand-name drugs account for most of the spending on prescription drugs in Medicare and in the United States overall.<sup>5,6</sup> Excluding such drugs from negotiations would purposely ignore the medicines for which drug corporation price gouging is most severe, and patients most deeply harmed by price gouging. Without an aggressive enforcement mechanism to compel drug corporations to engage in direct government price negotiations, in effect the policy would no longer be "negotiation" – it would instead become a highly structured process for the United States government to beg.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.kqed.org/news/11892232/at-kqed-pelosi-vows-to-pass-scaled-down-biden-agenda>

<sup>2</sup> <https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/2021/09/politico-harvard-poll-drug-price-negotiation-is-americans-top-priority-2088313>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.kff.org/health-costs/poll-finding/public-weighs-in-on-medicare-drug-negotiations/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.speaker.gov/newsroom/51018-4>

<sup>5</sup> <https://citizen.org/wp-content/uploads/Pharma-101-final-August.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://accessiblemeds.org/resources/reports/2021-savings-report>

We stand with you to fulfill your longstanding promises to pass drug price negotiation and bold drug pricing reform, and to finally deliver on years of promises to enact one of the most common sense and popular measures ever demanded of Congress.

Sincerely,

National & International

AIDS Healthcare Foundation  
American Federation of Teachers  
American Medical Student Association  
Be a Hero  
CASA in Action  
Center for Popular Democracy  
Communications Workers of America  
Community Catalyst  
Consumer Action  
Doctors For America  
Equal Rights Advocates  
Global Justice Institute of Metropolitan  
Community Churches  
Health Care Voices  
Indivisible  
International Federation of Professional and  
Technical Engineers (IFPTE)  
Just Care USA  
Main Street Alliance  
MomsRising  
MoveOn  
National Nurses United  
National Organization for Women  
Network Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
Our Revolution  
Partners for Dignity & Rights  
People's Action  
PrEP4All  
Prescription Justice  
Progressive Democrats of America  
Protect Our Care  
Public Citizen  
R2H Action [Right to Health]  
Rights & Democracy  
Social Security Works  
T1International  
Voices for Progress

State & Local

Citizen Action of Wisconsin  
Colorado Consumer Health Initiative  
Every Texan  
Health Care For All Massachusetts  
Health Care for All Oregon  
Health Care Is a Human Right WA  
Health Care Justice--NC  
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement  
Jane Addams Senior Caucus  
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action  
Maine People's Alliance  
Metro New York Health Care for All  
Our Revolution Alexandria  
Our Revolution Northern Virginia  
Our Revolution Virginia  
Portland Jobs with Justice  
Progressive Democrats of America - Arizona  
Progressive Democrats of America - Virginia  
Progressive Maryland  
PSARA (Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement  
Action)  
TakeAction Minnesota  
Tennessee Health Care Campaign  
Tennessee Justice Center  
United Vision for Idaho  
Universal Health Care Foundation of  
Connecticut  
Virginia Organizing  
Washington Community Action Network