



News from
U.S. Congressman

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Gutknecht introduces pharmaceutical market access bill *Calls for affordable prescription drugs for all Americans*

Washington, DC – First District Congressman **Gil Gutknecht** today introduced H.R. 2427, the Pharmaceutical Market Access Act of 2003. Joining Gutknecht were Reps. **Dan Burton** (R-Ind.), **Anne Northup** (R-Kent.) and **Christopher Shays** (R-Conn.). Burton, Northup and Shays are three of the bill's 26 original co-sponsors.

“The FDA has stood between Americans and affordable pharmaceuticals for too long,” **Gutknecht** said. “This bill will take a historic step in reducing the dramatic prescription drug price disparities. It is outrageous that the world's best consumers are forced to pay 30 to 300-percent more than our friends in Canada and Europe.”

The Pharmaceutical Market Access Act allows American consumers to import FDA-approved prescription drugs from FDA-approved facilities in 25 industrialized countries. The bill has the added benefit of improving safety provisions for Americans purchasing their drugs from other countries.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates seniors alone will spend \$1.8 trillion on prescription drugs over the next ten years. The proposed prescription drug benefit under Medicare is \$400 billion. Gutknecht asks the question, “Can we solve a \$1.8 trillion problem with a \$400 billion solution?”

“Americans should be allowed to purchase prescriptions at the same price these drugs are sold in Canada,” **Northup** said. “With Internet access, this consumer option is already a reality for many Americans. The FDA should no longer hinder Americans' access to FDA-approved medicines sold in other countries at cheaper prices.”

Burton, Chairman of the House Government Reform Subcommittee on Wellness and Human Rights, added, “Americans pay higher prices for their prescription drugs than the residents of any other country in the world. This is an increasingly difficult burden for our aging population to

bear. Far too many Americans must choose between filling their prescriptions and buying food. No American should have to make that choice.”

“The goal of this legislation is quite simple: to open markets and allow seniors in our country access to drugs at whatever price pharmaceutical companies are willing to sell their products,” said **Shays**. “American consumers should not be forced to subsidize pharmaceutical research and development for the rest of the world.”

Also in attendance at the press conference was Kate Stahl, an 84-year old grandmother who volunteers for the Minnesota Seniors Federation. “I’ll be making a drug-buying bus trip to Canada in a few weeks. It would be wonderful to have this old lady arrested and put in jail for breaking the law. Just imagine, this frail old lady forced to buy her prescription drugs in Canada because her American government found it more profitable to legislate on behalf of the pharmaceutical industry,” Stahl said.

“Everyday, American patriots such as Kate Stahl take a stand for affordable prescription drugs. It’s time Congress stands with them. Let’s open markets now,” Gutknecht concluded.

Gutknecht is the Chairman of the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Department Operations, Oversight, Nutrition and Forestry, Vice Chairman of the House Science Committee, and a member of the House Budget Committee.