

Senate Judiciary Committee Advances Grassley-Led Bills to Lower Prescription Drug Prices

WASHINGTON – Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) led a markup on six bipartisan Grassley-backed bills to boost competition in the pharmaceutical industry and improve access to more affordable prescription drugs. All six bills advanced in committee by voice vote.

“Americans facing skyrocketing prescription drug costs are eager for Congress to act. It’s why reducing prescription drug costs is one of my highest priorities. These bills will help shine a light on prescription drug pricing and clamp down on the abusive practices that continue to unfairly drive up drug costs for Iowans,” **Grassley said**.

Prescription Pricing for the People Act

This bill requires the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to complete a 6(b) study to examine the effects of consolidation on pricing in the PBM industry, as well as other potentially abusive behavior by PBMs. The bill instructs the FTC to provide timely policy recommendations to Congress to improve competition and protect consumers.

Additional cosponsors are Sens. Roger Marshall (R-Kan.), Peter Welch (D-Vt.), Tommy Tuberville (R-Ala.), Chris Coons (D-Del.), Thom Tillis (R-N.C.), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.), Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii), James Lankford (R-Okla.) and John Boozman (R-Ark.).

Drug Competition Enhancement Act:

This bill would spur generic and biosimilar marketplace competition by prohibiting branded drug manufacturers from deliberately preventing potential competitors from entering the marketplace using product hopping. This occurs when a bad actor’s exclusive right to a drug is about to expire, but they do not want to compete with generic alternatives. Instead, companies manipulate the market to move patients from the old drug onto a new one.

Additional cosponsors are Sens. John Cornyn (R-Texas), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) and Dick Durbin (D-Ill.).

Affordable Prescriptions for Patients Act:

The legislation would prevent bad actors in the pharmaceutical industry from deliberately abusing the patent system with “patent thickets” to stop potential competitors from entering the marketplace. The bill would pave the way for biosimilars to compete with branded drugs and aggressively lower drug prices for consumers in the process.

Additional cosponsors are Sens. John Cornyn (R-Texas), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) and Dick Durbin (D-Ill.).

Interagency Patent Coordination and Improvement Act:

The bipartisan bill would establish a task force between the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to improve communication and coordination in implementing each agency’s activities related to pharmaceutical patents. It promotes efficiency and good governance by fostering communication between the two agencies, while respecting their distinct purviews. It also bolsters innovation while preventing inappropriate tactics to delay access to affordable generic medications.

Additional cosponsors are Sens. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), Thom Tillis (R-N.C.), Peter Welch (D-Vt.) and Chris Coons (D-Del.).

Stop STALLING Act:

This legislation would deter branded pharmaceutical companies from filing sham “citizen petitions” with the FDA in order to interfere with the approval of generic and biosimilar medicines that compete with their own brand products, a tactic that delays patient access to affordable medications. The bill would also give the Federal Trade Commission enhanced authority to act against those who file sham petitions.

Additional cosponsors are Sens. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), Ted Cruz (R-Texas), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Cory Booker (D-N.J.) and Peter Welch (D-Vt.).

Preserve Access to Affordable Generics and Biosimilars Act:

This legislation would limit anticompetitive “pay-for-delay” deals that prevent or delay the introduction of affordable generic drugs that are 80 percent cheaper than their branded counterparts, on average. Pay-for-delay deals happen when branded pharmaceutical drug companies pay generic manufacturers to delay the introduction of cheaper substitutes – increasing the cost of prescriptions and imposing significant costs on our health care

system.

Additional cosponsors are Sens. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Cory Booker (D-N.J.), Peter Welch (D-Vt.), Kevin Cramer (R-N.D.), Joni Ernst (R-Iowa) and Mark Kelly (D-Ariz.).

Learn more about Grassley's work to lower prescription drug prices [HERE](#).

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