

September 8, 2021

The Honorable Robert Menendez
U.S. Senate
528 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Menendez,

As a proud community of Garden State stakeholders, we applaud you for being a leader in health care and for fighting for the Affordable Care Act and expanding coverage to nearly a million New Jersey residents. But access to coverage is not enough when the price of drugs is out of reach. **Today, we write to urge you to commit to joining your colleagues in supporting a comprehensive package to lower drug prices through Medicare negotiation and ensure greater affordability for drugs for all of America's families who are covered under Medicare, job-based insurance, and marketplace plans.** Such measures are essential to protecting the health and financial stability of families, patients, seniors, workers, businesses, and employers here in New Jersey and beyond. With your support, Americans will finally receive much needed relief from exorbitant prescription drug prices.

New Jerseyans cannot afford the current trend of prescription drug prices to continue. The average annual cost of prescription drug treatment in New Jersey rose by nearly 58 percent between 2012 and 2017.¹ Currently, New Jerseyans are being forced to make the impossible choice between paying for their monthly medication or paying for food for their families. Research shows that 24 percent of New Jersey residents have stopped taking medications as prescribed due to cost.²

Your constituents are very clear on this issue: 84 percent of New Jerseyans support requiring drug companies to negotiate with Medicare for lower prescription drug prices for all Americans, and only 11 percent of New Jerseyans agreed with the statement "by letting Medicare dictate prescription drug prices, we will undercut drug companies' ability to innovate and develop new drugs."³ With their health and well-being in jeopardy, rising drug costs is the number one issue for New Jersey voters.⁴

Evidence shows that out-of-control prescription drug costs will not subside on their own. In January of this year, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, drug companies "collectively have pushed through more brand name list price increases than any other January in the last decade."⁵ Strong intervention is necessary not only to reverse this trend, but also to continue to support the country in its economic recovery. One analysis finds that enacting comprehensive prescription drug pricing reform would reduce

¹ <https://states.aarp.org/new-jersey/aarp-nj-unveils-stop-rx-greed-video-campaign-to-combat-rising-prescription-drug-costs>

² State Health Access Data Assistance Center analysis of 2017 (most recent available) National Health Interview Survey data for people aged 19–64, at statehealthcompare.shadac.org. Estimates were created using the National Health Interview Survey weights, which are calibrated to the total U.S. civilian non-institutionalized population.

³ <https://www.westhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/West-Health-New-Jersey-Memo-F05.28.21.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.nj.com/politics/2019/09/angry-about-high-drug-prices-powerful-nj-democrat-is-sponsoring-bill-to-lower-them.html>

⁵ <https://www.46brooklyn.com/news/1/29/2020/whats-happening-to-generic-drug-prices-jan-2021-nadac-survey-update-hmthw-yzegb-db9lb-pkwcs-tw4ya-ashfh-rhlgc>

employer-sponsored insurance costs by more than \$240 billion over the next decade.⁶ Similarly, according to the Congressional Budget Office's score of H.R. 3, enacting comprehensive reform inclusive of Medicare price negotiation would save federal taxpayers more than \$482 billion over ten years.⁷ Americans throughout the country will be better off when Medicare negotiation is enacted into law, which will reduce costs not only for Medicare beneficiaries, but for those in job-based coverage and covered under marketplace plans. Without your support, businesses, employers, workers, patients, and families will continue to be burdened by ever increasing prescription drug costs.

Your support is critical to meeting this pivotal and time-sensitive moment. We look forward to working with you to pass comprehensive drug pricing reform legislation that responds to the needs of New Jersey and American families, patients, seniors, workers, businesses, and employers.

Sincerely,

<i>New Jersey Citizen Action</i>	<i>Communications Workers of America, Local 1077</i>	<i>Ironbound Community Corporation</i>
<i>AARP New Jersey</i>	<i>Communications Workers of America, Local 1078</i>	<i>La Casa de Don Pedro</i>
<i>BlueWaveNJ</i>	<i>Communications Workers of America, Local 1084</i>	<i>Latino Action Network</i>
<i>CIR/SEIU</i>	<i>Communications Workers of America, Local 1085</i>	<i>Lutherans Engaging in Advocacy Ministry</i>
<i>Communications Workers of America, Local 1000</i>	<i>Communications Workers of America, Local 1087</i>	<i>NAACP New Jersey State Conference</i>
<i>Communications Workers of America, Local 1014</i>	<i>Communications Workers of America, Local 1088</i>	<i>National Association of Social Workers - NJ Chapter</i>
<i>Communications Workers of America, Local 1031</i>	<i>Communications Workers of America, Local 1089</i>	<i>National Multiple Sclerosis Society</i>
<i>Communications Workers of America, Local 1032</i>	<i>Communications Workers of America Local 1081</i>	<i>New Brunswick Area NAACP</i>
<i>Communications Workers of America, Local 1033</i>	<i>Doctors for America</i>	<i>New Jersey Appleseed Public Interest Law Center</i>
<i>Communications Workers of America, Local 1036</i>	<i>Health Professional and Allied Employees</i>	<i>New Jersey Policy Perspective</i>
<i>Communications Workers of America, Local 1037</i>	<i>Hudson County Central Labor Council</i>	<i>NJ 11th For Change</i>
<i>Communications Workers of America, Local 1038</i>	<i>IFPTE Local 194</i>	<i>SPAN Parent Advocacy Network</i>
<i>Communications Workers of America, Local 1040</i>	<i>Indivisible Central NJ</i>	<i>STAND Central NJ</i>
<i>Communications Workers of America, Local 1075</i>	<i>Indivisible cranbury</i>	
<i>Communications Workers of America, Local 1077</i>	<i>Indivisible Highland Park</i>	

⁶ <https://www.cidsa.org/publications/commercial-savings-generated-by-medicare-negotiation-under-h-r-3>

⁷ <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/55936>