

Letter from Congressman Bernie Sanders

As the first Member of Congress to bring a busload of seniors across the Canadian border back in 1999, helping them purchase medicines at a fraction of the US price, I have fought long and hard to break the stranglehold of the pharmaceutical industry on American consumers. I will not ever forget that trip to Montreal, where women who were struggling with breast cancer were able to buy Tamoxifen, a widely prescribed breast cancer drug, at one tenth of the price they were forced to pay at home. Together with a strong coalition of Democrats and Republicans, Progressives and Conservatives we have made enormous progress on the issue of allowing Americans to buy safe and affordable prescription drugs from Canada and other countries with well-regulated pharmaceutical industries. Already, the American people and their local and state governments have laid the groundwork. An estimated two million Americans now buy safe and effective medicines from Canadian pharmacies each year; states across the country have set up websites for their employees, retirees and residents to buy such medicines; and cities from Burlington, Vermont, to Montgomery, Alabama, have reaped huge savings from similar efforts - in fact, Springfield, MA, has saved an estimated \$2 million since they launched a program nine months ago.

This past July, against ferocious opposition of the drug companies, the House of Representatives voted 243 to 186 for a bill that would allow American pharmacists, prescription drug distributors and individuals to purchase FDA-safety-approved medicines from a number of countries in the industrialized world. This bill was passed with strong tri-partisan support. More recently, as part of the growing momentum for the concept of prescription drug reimportation, a number of mayors and governors have taken steps to enable their government employees and retirees to access the affordable prescription drug prices enjoyed by our neighbors in Canada. These public officials think it is more important to keep teachers and police officers on the job than to squander taxpayer money to inflate the profits of the drug companies. The public agrees. A recent USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup poll indicated that seventy-one percent of Americans support having access to prescription drugs from Canada and other countries. The following is a list of cities and states that have moved forward in reimporting prescription drugs from Canada.