
SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8007

State of Washington

53rd Legislature

1993 Regular Session

By Senators Wojahn, West, Sheldon and Sellar

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1 TO THE HONORABLE BILL CLINTON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND
2 TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF
3 REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
4 UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, AND TO THE FEDERAL FOOD AND DRUG
5 ADMINISTRATION:

6 We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of
7 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully
8 represent and petition as follows:

9 WHEREAS, The Federal Food and Drug Administration establishes two
10 classes of drugs: Prescription drugs, which include specific habit-
11 forming drugs and drugs not safe for use except under the direct
12 supervision of a licensed physician because of toxicity or other
13 serious adverse reactions; and nonprescription or over-the-counter
14 drugs, which are generally regarded as safe for consumers to use by
15 following the required label directions and warnings and may be
16 purchased without a prescription; and

17 WHEREAS, The Food and Drug Administration has changed forty-six
18 drugs from prescription to over-the-counter status and is currently
19 considering changing the status of twenty additional drugs; and

1 WHEREAS, With so many new drugs being shifted from prescription to
2 over-the-counter status, the potential for medication misuse greatly
3 increases, particularly in the area of adverse drug reactions; and

4 WHEREAS, The problem of medication misuse of both prescription and
5 over-the-counter medications is spreading, particularly among the
6 elderly, as consumers over the age of sixty-five years are twice as
7 likely to suffer harmful drug reactions when compared with the general
8 population; and

9 WHEREAS, Elderly consumers over sixty years of age, who comprise
10 seventeen percent of the country's total population, account for fifty-
11 one percent of all deaths and thirty-nine percent of hospitalizations
12 from improper medication use; and

13 WHEREAS, Medication misuse costs money, for example, in California
14 alone, medication misuse among the elderly over the past seven years
15 has accounted for over seven hundred thirty-six million dollars in
16 health care costs; and

17 WHEREAS, Responsible self-medication is the informed and
18 appropriate use of nonprescription medicines for the relief of
19 symptoms, as well as the treatment, prevention, and cure of certain
20 conditions; and

21 WHEREAS, Over-the-counter medications play an integral and valuable
22 role in our health care system, providing low-cost nonprescription
23 medicines; and

24 WHEREAS, With more prescription drugs being made available over-
25 the-counter, a transitional class of drugs should be utilized, so that
26 certain prescription drugs being considered for over-the-counter
27 release can be evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration,
28 manufacturers, and pharmacists for a specific period, with the goal of
29 decreasing the time needed for the Food and Drug Administration to
30 approve a drug for over-the-counter status; and

31 WHEREAS, Pharmacists licensed in this state have lengthy education
32 on the actions and indications of drugs, adverse drug reactions, and
33 drug interactions, and, as the most highly trained health care
34 professionals in pharmacology, are the most qualified to determine the
35 potential effects of drugs on patients;

36 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the
37 President and the Congress of the United States authorize the Food and
38 Drug Administration to study a new transitional nonprescription drug
39 category that designates drugs available for sale only through a

1 licensed pharmacist, so that certain prescription drugs being
2 considered for over-the-counter release can be evaluated by the Food
3 and Drug Administration, manufacturers, and pharmacists for a specific
4 period, with the goal to decrease the time needed for the Food and Drug
5 Administration to approve a drug for over-the-counter.

6 BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately
7 transmitted to the Honorable Bill Clinton, President of the United
8 States, the Federal Food and Drug Administration, the President of the
9 United States Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and
10 each member of Congress from the State of Washington.

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