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SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8016

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State of Washington

59th Legislature

2005 Regular Session

By Senators Keiser, Eide, Spanel, Deccio, Thibaudeau, Benson, Franklin, Pridemore, Weinstein, Rasmussen, Kastama, Kohl-Welles, Kline, Doumit, Berkey, Brown, Poulsen, McAuliffe, Oke, Regala, Parlette and Shin

Read first time 02/11/2005. Referred to Committee on Health & Long-Term Care.

1 TO THE HONORABLE GEORGE W. BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,  
2 AND 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:

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

8 WHEREAS, American consumers pay the highest prices in the world for  
9 prescription medicines; and

10 WHEREAS, A prescription drug that costs one hundred dollars in the  
11 United States often costs as little as sixty dollars in Canada, as well  
12 as in most developed Western nations; and

13 WHEREAS, Prescription drug spending continues to increase at rates  
14 much higher than inflation each year -- sixteen percent in 1999,  
15 nineteen percent in 2000, seventeen percent in 2001, and ten percent in  
16 2002; and

17 WHEREAS, This trend is expected to continue, with drug spending  
18 projected to increase by an average of twelve and six-tenths percent  
19 annually until 2010; and

1           WHEREAS, The cost of prescription drugs is putting unsustainable  
2 pressure on the pocketbooks of uninsured Americans, more than six  
3 hundred thousand of whom live in Washington State, as well as our state  
4 budget; and

5           WHEREAS, Older Americans are particularly hard hit by higher prices  
6 because they take more prescription drugs and many must pay for their  
7 medications out of their own pockets; and

8           WHEREAS, Even with the addition of a prescription drug benefit to  
9 the Medicare package in 2006, seniors will still feel the effect of  
10 higher prices if something is not done to lower prices; and

11           WHEREAS, Washington State has made concerted efforts to control  
12 state spending by creating a preferred drug list that pertains to its  
13 three largest health purchasing agencies; and

14           WHEREAS, Even with these efforts and others at the state level,  
15 many of the thousands of uninsured seek additional relief from  
16 prescription drug prices; and

17           WHEREAS, The Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 set up a process  
18 whereby states could be certified by the United States Department of  
19 Health and Human Services to import prescription drugs in a safe  
20 manner;

21           NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that Congress  
22 and the Bush Administration constructively engage and support state  
23 efforts to allow local pharmacists to safely import prescription drugs  
24 so patients can stay at home and continue using their own doctor and  
25 local pharmacy, or failing that, that Congress and the Administration  
26 create a truly competitive marketplace by using the purchasing clout of  
27 Medicare to negotiate prices so Americans can purchase FDA-approved  
28 drugs at the much lower prices available in other countries.

29           BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately  
30 transmitted to the Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United  
31 States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the  
32 House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from the State of  
33 Washington.

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