

Eshoo Statement on Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act

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[Video]

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — Congresswoman Anna G. Eshoo, D-Palo Alto, made the following statement Friday on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives during debate on H.R. 4, the Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act of 2007. The House passed the bill 255 to 170.

"I'm proud as an original cosponsor to support the legislation that's before us. When the Medicare Part D legislation was brought to the floor of the House of Representatives in 2003, I voted against it. And I think it's worth recalling that evening. I think it's worth recalling that evening. A 15-minute vote on the clock was left open for almost three hours, where arms were broken and twisted in order to secure passage of the bill.

"One of the most troubling aspects of the legislation to the American people, and we have all heard it from our constituents, was that the legislation said that the Secretary of Health and Human Services was prohibited, prohibited from securing the best price to purchase pharmaceutical drugs. That is a bad rub with the American people. They saw through it and we are here today to correct that provision.

"Drug prices under the current Medicare prescription drug plan are more than 80 percent higher than prices negotiated by other agencies in the federal government, and they are more than 60 percent higher than prices in Canada. This year alone many beneficiaries in private drug plans will see their premiums increase by an average of 10 percent while some premiums will rise to more than six times their current costs to beneficiaries.

“So this effort today is a very simple and clear and purposefully directed one, and that is to get better prices for prescription drugs. Whether you are covered by insurance or not, some here are in Medicare, some are not, as Members of Congress. But you know when you go to buy, when you go to purchase, that we are paying high prices.

“We all support the innovation of the pharmaceutical industry. We know how important the innovation of the pharmaceutical industry is. This is not a vote or a bill to harm that or to damage it. But we want to be fair to the American people. We made a pledge that we would do this. This correction is more than in order.

“I ask my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation and I want to congratulate Ms. Emerson for the courage she’s demonstrated on this issue over the years.”