

Testimony in support of SB 409 for the January 30, 2019 hearing

Chair Monnes Anderson, Vice Chair Linthicum and members of the Senate Health Care Committee

Health Care for All Oregon-Action, a statewide organization working towards equitable, affordable, universal healthcare with over 120 supporting organizations and 33,000 Oregonians in our database, is very concerned about the egregious price increases in recent years by the pharmaceutical industry. As a state and a nation we must take a stand to make medication more affordable.

HCAO Action supports SB 409 which would allow legal, safe importation of prescription drugs from Canada with the objective of significant consumer cost savings to Oregonians while upholding strong safety standards shared by the US and Canada. We are pleased to see bipartisan bicameral support for SB 409. We support this bill because, until more action is taken at the federal level, it is imperative that the legislature acts immediately to make drugs more accessible for Oregonians.

Last year drug companies increased prescription drug prices at 10 times the rate of inflation. That is just unnecessary, and the market is broken. We need to take action now to protect seniors and other Oregonians who depend on prescription drugs. Drug importation is a simple, safe approach that creates healthy competition such that bad actors can't fly above the market while everyday people struggle to pay for essential prescription drugs that cost much less for our neighbors in Canada.

HCAO-Action respectfully requests the committee to support SB 409 and commends Sen. Monnes Anderson and the committee for giving this legislation due consideration in service to your constituencies and Oregonians from across the state. Furthermore, HCAO-Action commends Vice Chair Linthicum for his leadership on this issue. This bill is critical to the physical and economic health of all Oregonians whether they or a loved one rely on prescription medication.

Thanks for your time and consideration in this matter.



Lee Mercer, President, HCAO-Action
Charlie Swanson, HCAO-Action legislative committee chair