



Date: 01/30/2019

To: Sen. Laurie Monnes Anderson, Chair; Sen. Dennis Linthicum, Vice-Chair; Members of the Senate Health Care Committee

From: Jared Mason-Gere, Public Affairs Consultant, Oregon Education Association

RE: Support for SB 409, Prescription Drug Importation from Canada

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

The Oregon Education Association (OEA) represents 45,000 professional educators working works to improve the future of all Oregonians through quality public education. In order to do this, we must have sufficient, sustainable funding.

OEA supports SB 409 because it allows legal, safe importation of prescription drugs from Canada with the objective of significant consumer cost savings. Lowering health care costs for educators and for the means more dollars can go toward other needs. Pharmaceutical costs are well known to be one of the primary cost drivers effecting the cost of public sector health care.

SB 409 is carefully crafted to allow legal, safe importation of lower cost prescriptions. Many entities profit from high prescription drug prices, but drug companies profit the most. The drug companies make double the profits of pharmacists, distributors, insurance companies, and pharmacy benefit managers combined.

While drug companies need to profit in order to develop new medications, it seems the industry is more concerned with protecting their excessive profits. Last year in Oregon, a newspaper investigation showed that the pharmaceutical industry was using a phony patient group to send messages to voters while we saw prescription drug prices increase. If drug companies have enough money for these underhanded practices, which are far and away from the threshold of developing new medications, Oregonians are paying too much for prescription drugs.

OEA 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, OEA commends Vice Chair Linthicum for his leadership on this issue. This bill is critical to the physical and economic health of all Oregonians.