

Date: 2/19/19

To: The Honorable Mitch Greenlick, Chair; The Honorable Hayden, Vice-Chair; The Honorable Nosse, Vice-Chair; Members of the House Health Care Committee

From: Myra Haq, Portland, OR

RE: Please support HB 2689 and HB 2658

Chair Greenlick, Vice-Chairs Hayden and Nosse, and members of the House Health Care Committee,

Hello, and thank you for having me here today. My name is Myra Haq, I live in NE Portland, and I am here to ask you to support HB 2689 and HB 2658. House Bill 2689, chief co-sponsored by Rep. Nosse, will make safe importation of prescriptions from Canada a reality for people like me. House Bill 2658 would make it so that pharmaceutical companies have to give 60-day advance notice of price increases.

Let me tell you how these bills would help me: I am thirty-one years old, and I have Crohn's disease, which is an inflammatory gastrointestinal condition. There are several medications that help alleviate my symptoms, and all of them have outrageous prices in the United States.

- Humira is the main prescription used to treat Crohn's. AbbVie, the maker of Humira, just raised the price an additional 9.7% this January. AbbVie makes \$12.6 billion in profit on this drug alone. My medical costs exceeded \$300,000 before insurance when I took Humira injections. Now, I'm unable to afford them.
- I now take four pills a day of Lialda. That's \$1,181 before insurance. I don't have the option of skipping a dose to save money because it would set me back even further in my treatment.
- I also do chemotherapy monthly to help keep my symptoms at bay. Chemo causes an intense level of exhaustion, which makes it impossible to hold down a full-time job. It also deletes your immune system so even if you do have a day job, you'll have to call out sick all the time due to the germ exposure. The type of chemo I am on costs \$14,000 annually. It hasn't worked so far so I will eventually switch to a more expensive kind.

In addition to these expenses, I also have three different creams I use, because Crohn's causes skin (eczema) and lip problems (exfoliative cheilitis). I take Mupirocin, Triamcinolone and Hydrocortisone. That's an extra \$100 a month for all 3 and I often run out sooner. I can't skip the creams at all because I get eczema to the extent I can't bend my elbows. If the exfoliative cheilitis gets bad, I can't move my lips enough to eat.

Right now, I'm working as a nanny so I can get government assistance with my health care. I'm well-educated and intellectually capable of having a career other than nannying - but having this disease and having to spend so much money on treatment keeps me from meaningfully contributing to the economy through working or spending money.

I should not have to live like this at 31-years-old. These prescriptions cost PENNIES on the dollar in Canada. What's worse, is that when pharmaceutical companies look at me, all they see is the money they can make, and how fast they can make it. I deserve to know in advance if my prescriptions are going to skyrocket, so that I can find alternatives or save the money I need to shoulder the increase.

Thank you for considering these bills, which would help not only me, but so many other people.

Myra Haq
NE Portland