



# SB 409 & HB 2689

## Prescription Drug Importation



### Chief Sponsors

Sen. Linthicum, Sen. Steiner Hayward, Rep. Nosse

## Background

Patients in Oregon and the U.S. pay more for prescription drugs than anywhere in the world, whether it's an inhaler or heart medicine. In 2018 the Oregon Legislature passed HB 4005 which requires more transparency of those prescription drug costs when the manufacturer increases the price over a 10% threshold per year. The bill passed with bipartisan, supermajority support.

However, when it comes to bringing the cost of prescription drugs down, transparency is only the first step. Prescription drugs in Canada are more fairly priced than in the United States, sometimes to the tune of thousands of dollars. States like Vermont have recognized the cost savings of importation from Canada and designed a state program to import and distribute wholesale prescription drugs. This year, Oregon has the opportunity to do the same.

## The Problem

Last year drug companies increased prescription drug prices on American consumers at 10 times the rate of inflation. That is unnecessary, and the market is broken. We need to take action now to protect seniors and other Oregonians who depend on prescription drugs. Currently everyday people are paying hundreds if not thousands of dollars above the actual cost of the drugs on which they rely. Oregonians deserve better. That's why over 70% of Oregonians of all backgrounds and beliefs support importing prescription drugs from Canada (poll of 500 likely voters conducted August 2018).

## The Solution

Importing prescription drugs from Canada introduces a free market approach to curbing out of sight prescription drug prices. Canada is a natural fit because their safety standards are so similar to the U.S. Under SB 409 and HB 2689, Oregon would implement a drug importation program that would meet the safety requirements of the U.S. Health and Human Services Department as well as comply with protections around exporting to other states than Oregon and ensure significant consumer cost savings. Importation from Canada will save Oregonians thousands of dollars every year on prescription drugs and provide health plans with more competitive options.

**Drug companies make double the profits of pharmacists, distributors, insurance companies, and pharmacy benefit managers combined.**

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## Oregonians are calling on lawmakers to take action on lower drug prices.



"I am a former ER nurse and educator living on a fixed income. I have a chronic heart condition, severe osteoarthritis and crippling allergies. There are occasions where I have to prioritize medications and stop taking others, often times worsening my health. I have skipped refilling a prescription for one of my inhalers because at \$125, I cannot afford it.

When I recently sent a list of my prescriptions to a friend in Canada to compare costs, I was shocked by the difference in price. She reported that 17 of my prescribed drugs, for which I pay \$236 out of pocket here, cost only \$19 combined in Canada.

**The topical cream I use for my osteoarthritis pain is \$168 per tube here, and only \$4 in Canada. It's just not right.**

My story is one that is too familiar for many and it's unacceptable. It's time for pharmaceutical companies to be held accountable. I pay 31 times more than I would in Canada for my inhaler. I pay 12 times more for all my medications combined. I'm calling on my lawmakers to take action – Oregonians need lower prescription costs now."

*— Nancy Plemons, Vida, OR*

**Over 20 trusted organizations across Oregon have come together to fight back against pharmaceutical industry price-gouging.**

**See the full list & learn more: [AffordableRxNow.org](https://AffordableRxNow.org)**