



Date: 2/18/2019

To: Chair Greenlick, Vice-Chairs Hayden and Nosse, Members of the House Health Care Committee

From: Dan Torres, Political Coordinator Oregon AFSCME

RE: Position statement on HB 2689, 2658

Oregon AFSCME represents roughly 27,000 workers across the state from corrections officers to nurses to county employees. We have been engaged since the 2017 Session in an attempt to address the growing crisis of sky rocketing prescription drug prices. This crisis is contributing significantly to the increased cost of health care in the United States. Our members see the impact of increased costs in two ways. Firstly in their own life as healthcare consumers and secondly in the work they do and the people they care for.

Oregon AFSCME has been working in support of the Oregon Coalition for Affordable Prescriptions since 2017. As healthcare costs rise we are committed to finding ways to curb those costs without hurting the coverage our members rely on. We are very supportive of the efforts in both HB 2689 and 2658.

House Bill 2689 would allow for the importation of prescription drugs from Canada in a legal and safe manner. The intent is that this provides an option that reduces costs while providing for strong safety standards and legal options for consumers. We know that people are already seeking options outside of the United States in order to meet their prescription needs leaving it up to them to make sure their source is safe and reputable. Allowing Oregon to set up a regulated and legal avenue for importation will increase consumer safety and options.

House Bill 2658 would require manufacturers of prescription drugs to report to the Department of Consumer and Business Services their intent to raise prices no less than 60 days prior to the increase. Oregon AFSCME was as strong supporter of this provision that was looked at in prescription drug legislation previously. This requirement would give the market more time and better information allowing them to react to increases. Keep in mind, this does not prohibit them from increasing price, just requires transparency. In addition, it will only apply to prescription price increases over a certain threshold to capture the most egregious increases while recognizing small increases for generic drugs occur as a part of the market. We believe that this could help both with individual's consumers and other payers including state agencies a larger group plans.

For all these reasons above and many more you will hear from other advocates, we encourage the committee to support HB's 2658 and 2689.