

SB 764 Prohibits prescription drug companies from paying to delay generic drugs from going to market
SB 844 Creates Oregon Affordability Board
SB 763 Requires pharmaceutical sales reps to register their activities with the state

My name is Susan Watkins and I live in Salem, Oregon. I've lived in Oregon since 1955

Why we need these bills:

1. I'm a senior citizen now and I take two generic drugs for thyroid function and mild high blood pressure. On January 1, 2021 both of these prescriptions tripled in price. It seems incredible to me that at a time when so many people are out of work due to the Covid virus and forest fires that pharmaceutical companies would raise prices on any drugs.

2. Some time ago I saw my doctor for a respiratory infection. He prescribed a cough syrup to sooth a painful throat. The pharmacist charged \$100 for the prescription. When I asked her if the insurance company was covering this medication, she said it was. I then asked what the full price was. She said it was \$300. I told her I did not want the medication. I went back to the doctor and told him how much it cost. He was unaware of the price.

3. A week ago a friend told me she was going to have to take medication for her eyes for the rest of her life. The medication is \$100 per month. This eats significantly into her budget. The sad part of this is that in comparison to other drugs, her medication cost isn't too bad. Others pay in the \$1,000s.

4. When my doctor retired from his medical practice, I found a new doctor whom I thought was going to be a good fit for me. However, she soon began prescribing one drug after another that I didn't think I needed. I made a appointment with my former doctor to ask what he thought. His comment was "She's just throwing drugs at you." The new doctor also didn't know that the primary food sources of Vitamin D were egg yolks, liver, and fortified milk. I looked for another doctor.

5. We are told that certain subject areas such as medicine and science require the most up-to-date information. But, do they? A while back I had some seborrhea on my forehead. The standard treatment for this is cortisone cream. It makes it go away for a while, but it soon returns and you get another round of cortisone. However, when the pharmacist told me it thins the skin, I started looking for something else. My search led me to a book that told how medical conditions were treated in the 1920s. Seborrhea was diagnosed as a deficiency in sodium chloride (table salt). I thought, well that's easy to test. I started putting a little salt on my grapefruit in the morning. The seborrhea went away in two days and has never reappeared.

6. When I was in my early 40s, I was diagnosed with a mitral valve prolapse. The doctor put me on heart medication. It didn't help and another drug was tried. Finally a coworker recommended another doctor who had been an MD but became frustrated with the results he was getting and closed his practice to return to school and study microbiology. He opened a new practice in which he treated people without the use of drugs. He diagnosed my mitral valve issue as insufficient magnesium.

So the problem is that prescription drugs cost too much and they also don't always cure people of their ailments. Rather people must continue to take them for as long as they live and put them into bankruptcy. I don't understand why this is not criminal. The coalition of pharmaceutical companies, health insurance companies, the American Medical Association, and medical schools appear to be working together to maintain this atrocity. They are marching us down a one way highway with no exits.

I ask that our state's budget include funding to support the creation of a Drug Affordability Board, through Senate Bill 844. I also ask that you pass Senate Bill 763 to allow the state to monitor the activities of pharmaceutical sales representatives and Senate Bill 764 that prohibits prescription drug companies from paying to delay generic drugs from going to market.

These bills will limit price-gouging on prescription drugs and hold Pharma sales reps accountable by requiring them to register with the state—and will help Oregonians like me.