

Life Extension Defeats The Behemoth
House Votes To Allow Importation
of Lower Priced Prescription Drugs

Dear Life Extension Supporters,

Two days ago, everyone we talked to on Capitol Hill said there was NO chance the drug importation bill (H.R. 2427: The Pharmaceutical Market Access Act of 2003) would pass the House of Representatives.

Today--July 25--right before the House vote, I was told that there were so many drug lobbyists on Capitol Hill urging Representatives to defeat this bill that the lobbyists were standing in line to get into Congressional offices.

The pharmaceutical industry made it appear that everyone was against the right of Americans to purchase lower cost medications from other countries. The Wall Street Journal wrote an editorial against it, the FDA said it would open the floodgates to dangerous drugs, and even some religious groups went into overdrive to oppose it.

The drug lobby even induced Reverend Jerry Falwell to publish a vicious and slanderous attack against The Life Extension Foundation for supporting this bill. (Look forward to a fierce rebuttal to Jerry Falwell's baseless allegations against LEF very soon at www.lef.org.)

Eight days after Falwell's editorial appeared in The Washington Times newspaper, an FDA agent showed up at Life Extension's facilities. A seven-day intrusive inspection commenced that distracted our legal team from following the bill. This is why you were sent, at the last minute, the emergency email urging you to call, email or fax your Congressional Representative to support the bill.

The incredible news is that The Pharmaceutical Market Access Act of 2003 passed the House early this morning by a margin of 243 to 186. We, the people, defeated the drug industry's mammoth multi-million dollar attempt to keep this consumer-based legislation from passing.

Life Extension believes the drug lobby induced the FDA to initiate this inspection for the purpose of finding a way to destroy our organization. The drug cartel views The Life Extension Foundation as a threat to their profits and has demonstrated--through Jerry Falwell--how far they will go to discredit us.

Life Extension is preparing a detailed response to the FDA's assertions that we may not be allowed to relate the findings of peer-reviewed published studies (e.g., that folic acid reduces homocysteine levels) to our members. The FDA inspector even indicated that the agency might not allow our medical doctors to discuss this type of information when members call to ask questions about their blood test results. Life Extension has retained First Amendment attorney Jonathon Emord to initiate litigation against the FDA to protect our right to communicate truthful and legitimate information, as we have always done.

This bill now faces an uphill battle in the Senate, which is more heavily influenced by massive pharmaceutical company campaign contributions and lobbying. I am asking each of you to log on to www.senate.gov to obtain the names and addresses of your two Senators. Please handwrite, type or copy to them a personalized letter along the following lines:

The Honorable Senator _____

Washington, D.C. 20510

The crisis of costly healthcare can be mitigated if Americans are allowed to import lower-priced, identical FDA approved drugs from other countries. On July 25, the House passed the Pharmaceutical Market Access Act of 2003 (H.R.2427) by a margin of 243 to 186. This bill has strict safety standards in place that will ensure imported prescription drugs as safe as those I buy from my local pharmacy.

This prescription drug importation bill will soon be introduced in the Senate. I insist that you put your full support behind it, despite the intensive and deceptive lobbying efforts you will encounter.

This is my first letter to notify you how important this issue is to me. I understand that the Senate may be voting on this in September, and I will write you again to encourage you to vote for the Senate version of this House bill that will enable Americans to access lower-priced medications that have similar safety standards of this country from other countries.

Please let me know what your position on this drug import bill is now, as I would welcome the opportunity to clarify why it is so important that this bill pass the Senate as well.

Sincerely,

Name:

Address:

City: ST ZIP

Life Extension is risking its future by taking on the behemoth drug cartel. Please take the time to write to your two Senators now, and again in September. The upcoming October issue of Life Extension magazine that you will receive in September will contain an in-depth update as to the status of this bill in the Senate.

I want to personally thank everyone who phoned, faxed and/or emailed their Congressional Representative. Your efforts have paid off big time. For those who did not contact their Congressional representative, you now have the opportunity to speak out for your rights by writing to your two Senators.

You can follow the progress of this bill by logging on to www.lef.org regularly.

Together in Victory,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W Faloon', written in a cursive style.

William Faloon

Life Extension Foundation Buyers Club

Following is the House action summary on this H.R.2427

H.R.2427

Title: To authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to promulgate regulations for the reimportation of prescription drugs, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: Rep Gutknecht, Gil [MN-1] (introduced 6/11/2003) **Cosponsors:** 53

Related Bills: H.RES.335

Latest Major Action: 7/25/2003 Passed/agreed to in House. Status: On passage Passed by recorded vote: 243 - 186 (Roll no. 445).

Jul 25, 7:58 AM EDT

House OKs Importation of Lower-Cost Drugs

WASHINGTON (AP) -- The House approved legislation early Friday allowing Americans to purchase prescription medicine abroad, voting 243-186 after a clash that pitted the hope of lower prices against the fear of counterfeit drugs.

The vote marked a defeat for the pharmaceutical industry, which spends millions lobbying Congress, and was repeatedly criticized by lawmakers in both parties for putting profits ahead of patients.

"It's not about safety, it's about money," said conservative Rep. Dan Burton, R-Ind., practically hissing the word. "There's a woman ... who's dying of breast cancer," he added. "... How do you tell her when she goes to buy tamoxifen that she can't afford it but she could go right across the border to Canada and get it for one sixth or one seventh the cost."

"The country is going to be flooded with unsafe pharmaceutical counterfeits, over-age pharmaceuticals, pharmaceuticals that don't preserve and protect the safety of our citizens," countered Rep. John Dingell, a Michigan Democrat who has long worked on drug issues.

The vote sent the bill to the Senate, and House supporters hoped it would be incorporated, as well, in any final compromise on Medicare prescription drug legislation.

But the chances of that appeared to dim even as the debate unfolded on the House floor, when 53 senators announced their opposition to any change in the current law, which allows the Secretary of Health and Human Services to decide whether importation would be safe.

Among those signing a letter on the issue were Sens. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, and Don Nickles, R-Okla., both of whom are part of the group hoping to craft a final Medicare bill this fall.

Congress has approved legislation twice before dealing with the drug importation issue, but both times said the secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services would first have to certify that the drugs would be safe. Neither Donna Shalala, who served under former President Clinton, nor Tommy Thompson, who holds office under President Bush, was willing to do so.

This time, the bill backed by Republican Reps. Gil Gutknecht of Minnesota, Rep. Jo Ann Emerson of Missouri and Democratic Rep. Rahm Emanuel of Illinois, ordered HHS to set up a system to allow importation of FDA-approved drugs from FDA-approved facilities in Canada, the European Union and seven other nations.

The measure also would require imported medicine to be shipped in anti-tampering and anti-counterfeiting packaging.

Even so, the Bush administration issued a statement calling the bill "dangerous legislation."

And FDA Commissioner Mark McClellan said the measure "creates a wide channel for large volumes of unapproved drugs and other products to enter the United States that are potentially injurious to public health and pose a threat to the security of our nation's drug supply."

The vote crossed the customary party and ideological lines in the House. There were 155 Democrats, 87 Republicans and 1 independent in favor, and 45 Democrats and 141 Republicans opposed.

The vote capped an emotional debate, supporters repeatedly referring to cancer victims who must pay more for medicine at home than they would in Canada or Germany, and opponents warning of drugs that look legitimate, but are worthless, or even hazardous.

Gutknecht held up two packages of the drug tamoxifen, used to combat breast cancer. "Why is it that Americans have to spend \$260 for this life-saving drug when Germans can buy it for \$60," he said.

But Rep. W.J. Tauzin, R-La., countered by showing the website of a Canadian prescription drug house. He said FDA officials had purchased anti-seizure medication from the company, but found it was made in India, not Canada. "It is water inside this package," he said.

The measure had wide appeal to consumers - thousands of whom have ridden in buses to Canada in recent years to buy lower-cost drugs. And several lawmakers accused the drug industry of merely trying to protect its own profits. Liberal Rep. Bernard Sanders, I-Vt., said it had spread "lies, lies, and lies again" in an effort to kill the bill.

"We do believe there is a safety problem," said Mark Grayson, a spokesman for the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, known as PhRMA. He also said the legislation would import the system of price controls that foreign government impose on drugs.

He said he didn't know how much the group was spending to defeat the bill, adding, "We don't discuss that."

The pharmaceutical industry made more than \$20 million in political contributions in the past election, with roughly \$8 of every \$10 going to Republicans, according to an analysis by the Center for Responsive Politics.

PhRMA itself gave more than \$3 million and spent more than \$14 million lobbying Congress on various issues last year. In addition, the organization gave millions last year to an organization that aired television commercials on behalf of candidates who backed a GOP-written prescription drug bill.

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