

# Grijalva's District Dispatch

Official Newsletter of Congressman Raúl M. Grijalva



## DRUG PRICES & PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS

There's been a lot of talk lately about prescription drug prices and preexisting conditions. Let's take a closer look at efforts to lower drug costs and what will work, and also understand why Republican proposals to undo protections for people with preexisting conditions are so harmful.

### Drug Prices

President Trump has repeatedly stated that he supports lowering drug prices. Unfortunately, Mr. Trump then nominated former Eli Lilly top official, Alex Azar, as Secretary of Health and Human Services. Mr. Azar played a key role in skyrocketing prices for Humalog and insulin drugs. It's not terribly surprising that administration efforts to address rising drug costs since then have been watered down and largely based around voluntary participation by big pharmaceutical companies themselves. In fact, two weeks after the Trump administration unveiled their plan to lower drug prices in May 2018; the drug company Bayer hiked the list prices of two cancer drugs by more than \$1,000 per month. And due to the Trump-GOP tax cut law, Pfizer is projected to get a \$25.5 billion tax cut[i]. Meanwhile, the prices of Pfizer's top-selling drugs rose by about 30% on average since just before Trump took office[ii].

**Real solutions for lowering drug prices exist, they just require politicians who are willing to stand up to large pharmaceutical companies. I am a proud cosponsor H.R. 1776, the Improving Access to Affordable Prescription Drugs Act, which will:**

- End the monopoly abuses of prescription drug corporations that keep prices high.
- Accelerate cost-lowering generic competition.
- Stop companies from gouging consumers with steep price increases.
- Allow Medicare to negotiate fair drug prices and lower out-of-pocket costs for seniors.
- Remove tax deductions for TV and Internet ads that promote drugs to consumers.
- Cap out-of-pocket medicine costs in health insurance plans.
- Require transparency from the drug industry.

### Pre-existing Conditions

After voting to take away protections for people with pre-existing conditions in their Affordable Care Act (ACA) repeal bills, Republicans have now turned to the courts to dismantle these protections. Currently, there is a court case brought by Republican attorney generals representing 20 states—including Arizona—that will remove protections for 130 million Americans with health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, cancer, mental illness or substance abuse. This includes 68 million women and girls nationwide, and millions of pregnant women.

**In addition to voting repeatedly against repealing the ACA and its protections, I have cosponsored a House Resolution, H.Res. 1031, that will authorize the U.S. House of Representatives to intervene in the pending lawsuit and defend the constitutionality of the ACA's coverage protections for people with pre-existing conditions.**

Because Republicans are now claiming to support people with preexisting conditions, I will also be sending a letter to Attorney's Generals asking them to agree to drop their lawsuit that is set to harm 130 million people with preexisting conditions.

Thank you for allowing me to discuss such an important topic with you. Lowering health care and prescription drug costs is an issue of critical importance to me, and I will keep fighting attempts that do anything to the contrary. If you would like additional information are experiencing issues with any federal agency, please contact my office. Our dedicated staff has years of experience in helping constituents in our District who need assistance with federal agency-related matters. We offer office hours in Tucson, Avondale and Somerton as well as mobile office hours in Nogales and San Luis, Arizona.

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