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SUPPORT S 2328 (DORGAN-SNOWE)

LEGALIZED PRESCRIPTION DRUG IMPORTATION WILL BENEFIT CONSUMERS

September 27, 2004

Dear Senator,

We are writing on behalf of state Public Interest Research Groups (PIRG) to urge you to support S 2328 (Dorgan-Snowe), legislation to legalize prescription drug importation. U.S. PIRG serves as the national lobbying office for the non-profit, non-partisan state Public Interest Research Groups, and supports efforts across the country to reduce the cost of prescription drugs for all consumers.

Americans pay more for their prescription drugs than residents of every other industrialized nation. S 2328 would provide consumers with immediate access to affordable prescription medication. Congress has watched prescription drug prices skyrocket for decades without taking substantive action to reign in prices. There is no question that the current high cost of prescription drugs prevents millions of Americans from filling needed prescriptions.

We have one suggestion to improve S 2328. In its current form, the legislation places new restrictions on the amount of prescription medication Americans can import from certain countries. The goal of S 2328 should be to increase, not reduce, consumers' ability to purchase affordable medication. For decades American consumers have traveled across both our northern and southern borders to buy prescription drugs that would otherwise be unaffordable. Under current U.S. Customs regulations, Americans can import up to a three-month supply of prescriptions for their personal use each week. It is essential that legislation to legalize importation of prescription drugs preserve the level of personal importation allowed under current federal rules. U.S. PIRG supports amendments to ensure that S 2328 will not negatively impact consumers already importing prescription medication for personal use.

American consumers need immediate relief from the unjustly high cost of prescription drug prices. Until Congress decides on a strategy to lower prescription drug prices in America, it must provide an interim solution for the millions of consumers that cannot afford to purchase their medication. Legalizing prescription drug importation will give consumers timely access to affordable medication, and pressure the pharmaceutical industry to lower the prices of prescription drugs sold in America.

U.S. PIRG urges you to act now to legalize prescription drug importation; don't wait until next session to address this health crisis. By passing S 2328, you would give millions of Americans the ability to buy needed prescription medication and improve their quality of life. Please contact me if you or your staff have any questions at (202) 546-9707.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Johnson
Consumer Advocate