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NRLN is a coalition of 30 Retiree Associations advocating the rights of more than 2 million American retirees from...

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May 1, 2011

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-2305

Dear Senator Klobuchar:

On behalf of the more than 2 million retirees represented by the National Retiree Legislative Network (NRLN), I want to commend you for sponsoring S. 44, the Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act of 2011. We applaud you for taking action to introduce legislation that would be very beneficial to retirees by directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate with pharmaceutical manufacturers the prices that may be charged to Medicare Part D and Medicare Advantage prescription drug plans.

The NRLN has long been an advocate for enabling the development of formularies and requiring competitive bids for prescription drugs for Americans age 65 and older. We hope the members of the Senate Finance Committee will soon recognize the wisdom in passing S. 44 so the entire Senate can vote for its passage.

Also, as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, we appreciate your being a co-sponsor of S. 27, the Preserve Access to Affordable Generics Act, that has been referred to your Committee. We hope that you will urge your Senate Judiciary Committee colleagues to pass S. 27. It would do a great deal to enhance competition in America's pharmaceutical market by stopping anticompetitive agreements between brand name and generic drug manufactures. We also appreciate your being a co-sponsor of S. 319, the Pharmaceutical Market Access and Drug Safety Act of 2011. The NRLN believes as you do that U.S.-licensed pharmacies and drug wholesalers should be allowed to import FDA-approved medications from countries with tough safety standards.

Last month, NRLN Grassroots Network members emailed letters to all members of Congress urging support for S. 44, S. 27 and S. 319. NRLN members who are your Minnesota constituents also wrote to you in your role as a Judiciary Committee member to request your committee pass S. 27. Your staff may have shared with you some of the emails from your Minnesota constituents about the prescription drug bills.

If you read those emails to your Washington, DC office, you know that many of your older constituents are fed up with rising costs of their medicines. The health care bill passed last year didn't—and won't—fix this if the pharmaceutical companies are allowed to continue to charge higher and higher prices for prescription drugs purchased by Medicare and Medicare Advantage participants. These three pieces of legislation would most directly address the problem, allowing seniors to have greater access to vital pharmaceutical drugs by having greater control as consumers over costs.

(More)

On behalf of NRLN members, my staff and I stand ready to assist you in this effort in every possible way. We welcome any suggestions you might offer on how the NRLN can be of further help to gain support for S. 44. Marta Bascom, the NRLN's Executive Director in Washington, D.C. can be reached by phone at 703-863-9611 or via email at marta.bascom@linkspace.net .

Your sponsorship of S. 44 is greatly appreciated and we are grateful for your being a co-sponsor of S. 27 and S. 319. Enactment of these three bills would result in savings for Americans, and reduce the cost of health care and Medicare without adding to the budget deficit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Kadereit". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bill Kadereit, President

National Retiree Legislative Network