



601 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Suite 900, South Building

Washington, D.C. 20004-2601

Tel: 202-220-3172 Toll-Free: 1-866-360-7197

Email: [contact@nrln.org](mailto:contact@nrln.org) Website: [www.nrln.org](http://www.nrln.org)

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*The NRLN advocates the rights of more than 2 million American retirees from...*

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September 10, 2019

The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-3203

Dear Minority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the more than 2 million retirees and future retirees represented by the National Retiree Legislative Network (NRLN), I am requesting you support calling for a Senate vote on **S. 1416, Affordable Prescriptions for Patients Act of 2019**. The bill was passed by the Senate Judiciary Committee on June 28, 2019 and placed on the Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders – Calendar No. 132.

Passage of **S. 1416** would help prevent drug companies from deliberately abusing the patent system by curbing the pharmaceutical drug industry's anti-competitive behaviors of "product hopping" and "patent thicketing" that restrict access to lower priced generic and biosimilar drugs.

"Product Hopping" takes advantage of the FDA approval system to get around pharmacy-level generic substitution laws. When making a new version of a drug that new drug can't be substituted for the generic, because the generic is tied to the old version. Sometimes the manufacturer will remove the old version from the market, leaving the generic with nowhere to go, as patients are forcibly switched to the new version.

Pharmaceutical drugs, especially biologics, often have several patents. Some manufacturers take advantage of the complex interplay of the different kinds of patents and deploy these patents strategically in order to prevent competition. Generic or biosimilar manufacturers have to fight through these patents (the so-called 'thicket') before they can get their drug approved.

**S. 1416** would create greater efficiency in the drug manufacturing by allowing resolution of patent differences between brand and generic drugmakers prior to litigation. When there is litigation, courts would be allowed to stop drugmakers from using patent thickets to unjustly limit competitors from coming to market. This would ensure more drug choices and affordable prices.

If you would like to know more about why the NRLN supports **S. 1416**, please ask a member of your staff to contact me or Alyson Parker, the NRLN's Executive Director in Washington, DC at 813-545-6792 or [executivedirector@nrln.org](mailto:executivedirector@nrln.org).

Sincerely,

Bill Kadereit, President,  
National Retiree Legislative Network  
Phone: 972-722-5928  
Email: [president@nrln.org](mailto:president@nrln.org)