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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 Olympia Snowe
United States Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-1903

Dear Senator Snowe:

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. 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. American consumers—especially retirees living on modest incomes—would benefit from lower prices for medicines by introducing increased competition in our nation's pharmaceutical market.

My staff and I stand ready to assist you in this effort every possible way. We welcome any suggestions you might offer on how the NRLN can be of help to gain support for S. 319. 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.

Since you are a member of the Senate Finance committee, I urge you to become a co-sponsor of S. 44, the Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act of 2011, that is pending in the Finance Committee. Enactment of this bill would direct 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.

In addition, I hope you will become a co-sponsor of S. 27, the Preserve Access to Affordable Generics Act, that is pending in the Senate Judiciary Committee. This bill would do a great deal to enhance competition in America's pharmaceutical market by stopping anticompetitive agreements between brand name and generic drug manufactures.

Your introduction of S. 319 shows you recognize that Americans are fed up with rising pharmaceutical costs. The health care bill passed last year didn't—and won't—fix this if U.S. consumers continue to be excluded from the benefit of having access to lower-priced prescription drugs from foreign countries with strong safety standards. These three pieces of legislation would most directly address the problem by allowing seniors to have greater access to vital pharmaceutical drugs by having greater control as consumers over costs.

(More)

Your sponsorship of S. 319 is greatly appreciated and we'll also be grateful for your support of S. 27 and S. 44. 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 style and is positioned above the typed name.

Bill Kadereit, President
National Retiree Legislative Network