

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 28, 2019

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232, the Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

As Members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, we write to request that you pursue bold prescription drug pricing reforms when Congress reconvenes in September. Our Caucus must work together with action to finally fulfill the promise of the For the People agenda to actually lower drug prices.

We have all heard stories from constituents about having to ration insulin because they cannot afford another vial, and families having to skip mortgage payments so that they can pay for their child's medicine. Enough is enough. Americans cannot afford to be held hostage by pharmaceutical companies any longer; we must guarantee lower prices for all Americans. With prices having already been hiked, 4-times faster than inflation, on more than 3,000 prescription drugs during 2019, we must pursue reforms now that will actually lower prices.<sup>1</sup>

We welcome the opportunity to join you in discussing potential drug pricing reforms. We continue to seek a legislative proposal that will: 1) require direct negotiation of drug prices between pharmaceutical companies and the federal government, 2) not include a third-party arbitration scheme for settling drug pricing disputes, 3) incorporate robust safeguards, such as competitive licensing, to guarantee patient access in cases where pharmaceutical companies refuse to agree to reasonable prices, and 4) not limit the number of drugs that could be subject to negotiation.

As you continue to craft the foundations of a bold prescription drug pricing reform, we respectfully request – as we have previously – that members of the Progressive Caucus be included in proposal development before any proposal from your office is finalized for public presentation. Too often, we have had to rely upon rumor and news reports to learn what may well be inaccurate information about the substance of your proposal. Earlier this summer, speaking at the Brookings Institution, Wendell Primus indicated that he is “very comfortable that [progressives] will accept” the forthcoming proposal.<sup>2</sup> Yet the specifics he described appear to fall far short of our longstanding

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.csrpxp.org/big-pharma-watch-manufacturers-thumb-nose-at-drug-price-crisis/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/454192-pelosi-aide-major-bill-to-lower-drug-prices-coming-in-september>

objectives by including a role for binding arbitration, limiting the scope of drugs, and excluding from any negotiation newly launched drugs and orphan drugs.

We must also ensure that any proposal is developed more transparently and considered through regular order in relevant committees. We respectfully request that any committee consideration of drug price negotiation include equal consideration for proposed alternatives with legislative sponsors given an opportunity to present their plans and select a witness to advocate for its merits.

We thank you for considering our requests, and we look forward to working with you to lower prescription drug costs and save lives.

Sincerely,



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Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress and CPC Co-Chair



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Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress and CPC Co-Chair



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Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress



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Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress



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Jesus G. "Chuy" Garcia  
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Steny Hoyer, Majority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives