

Prescription Justice Legislator Report Card

Most members of Congress publicly claim to support actions to lower drug prices. Nevertheless, over the past ten years, no bill that concretely addresses prescription drug price reform has passed both the House and the Senate.

The Prescription Justice Legislator Report Card evaluates individual members of Congress on their support for actions that will control and reduce prescription drug prices.

Methodology

Because there have been so few votes that bear directly on this issue, we use additional factors to build a full picture of a legislator's record on prescription drug prices. Each of the factors has a point value, with a perfect score being 100.

The four report card factors are:

1. Votes on the few bills or federal agency appointees that bear on this issue (25 points)
2. Sponsors or co-sponsors favorable bills (30 points)
3. Accepts campaign contributions from pharmaceutical companies (25 points)
4. Publicly supports actions to reduce drug prices (20 points)

Votes

The point values for the Dorgan Amendment and the Medicare negotiation act are smaller because less than half the current members of the Senate were in office at the time of the votes.

Date	Roll Call Vote	Result	Point Value
September 17, 2018	S.2554, Patient Right to Know Drug Prices Act	Passed, 98-2	5
September 9, 2018	S.2553, Know the Lowest Price Act of 2018	Passed by unanimous consent	0
January 24, 2018	Confirmation of Alex Azar as United States Secretary of Health and Human Services	Confirmed, 55-43	5
January 11, 2017	Klobuchar Amdt. No. 178 to S.Con.Res 3, To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to lower prescription drug prices for Americans by importing drugs from Canada	Rejected, 46-52	5
December 15, 2009	Dorgan Amdt. No. 2793, To provide for the importation of prescription drugs	Rejected, 51-48	5
April 18, 2007	S.3 - Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act of 2007	Rejected, 55-42	5

Bills Sponsored or Co-Sponsored

The following bills were introduced in the Senate for 115th Congress and are in line with the mission of Prescription Justice. Only two bills (S. 2553, Know the Lowest Price Act of 2018 & S. 2554, Patient Right to Know Drug Prices Act) were acted on and passed. The other bills were referred to committees and not brought to votes by the 115th Congress.

- S. 41 Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act of 2017
- S. 124 Preserve Access to Affordable Generics Act
- S. 297 Increasing Competition in Pharmaceuticals Act
- S. 348 Prescription Drug and Health Improvement Act of 2017
- S. 469 Affordable and Safe Prescription Drug Importation Act
- S. 495 Medical Innovation Prize Fund Act
- S. 637 Creating Transparency to Have Drug Rebates Unlocked (C-THRU) Act of 2017
- S. 771 Improving Access To Affordable Prescription Drugs Act
- S. 974 CREATES Act of 2017
- S. 1131 Fair Accountability and Innovative Research Drug Pricing Act of 2017
- S. 1348 Stopping the Pharmaceutical Industry from Keeping Drugs Expensive (SPIKE) Act of 2017
- S. 1369 Stop Price Gouging Act
- S. 1511 Keeping Health Insurance Affordable Act of 2017
- S. 1688 Empowering Medicare Seniors to Negotiate Drug Prices Act of 2017
- S. 1970 Medicare-X Choice Act of 2017
- S. 2011 Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Act
- S. 2157 Drug-Price Transparency in Communications Act
- S. 2553 Know the Lowest Price Act of 2018
- S. 2554 Patient Right to Know Drug Prices Act

Note: A complicating factor in assigning point values to bill sponsorship is that Senate and House leadership rarely participates.

Campaign Contributions

The influence of large donors on the behavior of legislators is a hot topic for debate. We presume that it has some effect, and the larger donation, the larger the effect. However, large donations, including from drug companies, mean more, percentage wise, to a legislator who raises relatively less money.

For example, former Senator Hatch raised \$8,523,118, from 2013-2018, but \$300,709 or 3.5% came from drug companies. By contrast, Senator McConnell received \$331,663 from drug companies but he raised \$30,383,438, so his percentage from drug companies is 1.1%.

To equalize the presumed influence of money in calculating the value of campaign contributions from pharmaceutical companies toward the scorecard, we created a score based on the sum of two rankings: First, the ranking of members on the dollar amounts from pharmaceutical companies and, second, the ranking of the percentage of total contributions coming from pharmaceutical companies.

The Center for Responsive Politics provided us with the contributions to each US Senator from pharmaceutical companies, for the 2014-2018 election cycles.

Total campaign contributions come from their OpenSecrets.org website and are the totals raised by Campaign Committees & Leadership PACs Combined, for the years 2013 – 2018.

Note: Five Senators ran for President in 2016, and all but Lamar Alexander received significantly higher donations from drug companies than in previous or subsequent years. OpenSecrets did not split monies received for presidential campaigns from monies received for a Senate campaign. To avoid skewing the data by giving too much weight to 2016 for these presidential candidates, we reduced their drug company donation numbers in 2016 by 80%.

Public Statements

In our media-rich world, legislators have endless opportunity to make public statements about policy issues. Two problems present themselves when trying to use these statements in building a scorecard around a specific issue. First: where to find the data and, second, which ones to take most seriously. We chose to use the legislators' official websites, looking for a simple Yes/No to the question: Is the legislator making a statement on their website that seems favorable to the actions we'd like to see taken by the federal government in response to the price of prescription drugs?

Note: The report card information has been collected only for the US Senate through 2018. The next phase of the project will include the US House and will include the many recent voting records.

Data has been provided by the [Center for Responsive Politics](#). For more information on our research, methodology and process, please [contact us](#).