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United States Senate

APPROPRIATIONS
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House Bill 340

February 6, 2024

Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee
Maryland General Assembly
Room 241
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Honorable Bonnie Cullison
Vice Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee
Maryland General Assembly
Room 241
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and Vice Chair Cullison:

I write to share my support for House Bill 340, the Lowering Prescription Drug Costs for All Marylanders Act of 2024, and I thank Vice Chair Cullison and Delegate White Holland for leading this effort. I appreciate the opportunity to advocate on behalf of my constituents in Maryland and request that this written testimony be included in the record.

According to public surveys recently conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF), 82% of respondents indicated that the cost of prescription drugs in the U.S. are unreasonable, over 30% of adults reported not taking their medications as prescribed in the last year because of cost, and individuals with an annual household income of less than \$40,000 and those taking four or more prescription medications reported greater affordability challenges.¹

I commend the State of Maryland's leadership in taking the first step to address affordability challenges and the increasingly high costs of prescription drugs for Marylanders by passing the nation's first state prescription drug affordability board in 2019 (PDAB).²

I am proud to have worked with President Biden and colleagues in the Senate and House to enact the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, which continues to lower out-of-pocket health care and prescription

¹ Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF), "Public Opinion on Prescription Drugs and Their Prices," <https://www.kff.org/health-costs/poll-finding/public-opinion-on-prescription-drugs-and-their-prices/>.

² Maryland General Assembly (MGA) Health and Government Operations/Finance, "Health Prescription Drug Affordability Board," <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2019RS/bills/hb/hb0768e.pdf>.

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drug costs for Marylanders.³ I am also proud to have introduced the We Protect American Investment in Drugs Act (We PAID Act) in the 116th Congress, which would establish an independent drug affordability and access committee to ensure prescription drug prices are set at reasonable levels for all Americans.⁴

I strongly urge the Maryland General Assembly to continue to serve as an example at the state level to ensure that all Marylanders and families have equitable and affordable access to the prescription drug medications that they need. I also look forward to reintroducing the We PAID Act in the 118th Congress to address prescription drug prices nationally.

I support the passage of HB 340 and request the Committee give it full consideration.

Sincerely,



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senate

³ In 2024, the IRA reduces premiums by hundreds of dollars per person, on average, for approximately 153,000 Marylanders, caps out-of-pocket costs for insulin at \$35 per month for Medicare Part B and Part D beneficiaries for nearly 21,000 Marylanders, and eliminates Medicare Part D vaccine cost-sharing requirements for more than 55,900 Marylanders. United States Senate Special Committee on Aging, “Inflation Reduction Act: Lowering Rx Costs: How Maryland Benefits,” <https://www.aging.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Maryland%20IRA%20Implementation.pdf>.

⁴ Congress.gov, “S. 2387 – We Protect American Investment in Drugs Act,” <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/2387/text?s=7&r=1&q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22we++protect+american+investment+in+drugs+act%22%7D>.