

This is a note from Bernie dated May 12, 2018 about the President's talk on drug prices.



During the presidential campaign, Donald Trump promised to take on the outrageously high prices of the pharmaceutical industry. He told us they were getting away with murder. But the truth is, and this will not surprise you, President Trump has shown time and time again he does not have the guts to do what it takes to police drug companies and lower prices. Yesterday's speech from the president demonstrated that once again.

Here is what I believe: the greed of pharmaceutical companies in this country is killing Americans. In the United States, and this is unique among industrialized nations, drug companies can charge any price they want for prescription drugs. And as a result, we pay the highest prices in the world, by far, for the medicines we use.

If the president were serious about taking action that lowers drug prices, he would be talking about allowing Medicare to negotiate with drugmakers for lower prices. If the president truly wanted to take on the drug companies he would be telling his friends in the Republican Party that it was long past time for the United States to allow the importation of less expensive but safe and affordable drugs from other countries.

I have introduced legislation that would do both of those things, because the goal of a sane health care system in this country should be to keep people well, not to make stockholders rich.

Taking on the greed of the pharmaceutical industry has been one of my longtime fights. In 1999, I became the first member of Congress to take constituents over the Canadian border to purchase low-cost prescription

drugs. With tears in their eyes, working-class women, struggling against breast cancer, were able to purchase the same brand-name medicine they were using in Vermont for one-tenth of the price in Montreal.

For most people, the ideas in my bill are common sense.

But the truth is that the insurance and pharmaceutical companies in this country shamelessly use their cash to peddle influence in Washington. And just this week, we learned that Novartis — one of the largest multinational drug companies — paid Trump's personal attorney Michael Cohen \$1.2 million. He has no policy or health care experience, so we have to ask: what did he promise them in exchange for this exorbitant fee?

In recent years pharmaceutical companies have spent billions of dollars in lobbying and campaign contributions to make sure that we maintain a dysfunctional, but profitable, approach to health care.

Honestly, I cannot remember Big Pharma ever losing a major legislative battle. They win, the American people lose.

And under this president, they are doing a lot more winning.

It does not have to be that way. We do not have to accept the fact that these giant businesses are profiting from the pain and suffering of middle-class Americans. We do not have to tolerate that one in five adults in America cannot afford their prescriptions while pharmaceutical CEOs make millions — and have gotten even richer as some of the biggest winners in Trump's tax scam.

This has got to change. And change starts with making your voices heard. Keep the faith sisters and brothers. And please remember, despair is not an option. We must keep fighting.

In solidarity,
Bernie Sanders