

States. It is a drug called Prilosec. Prilosec is prescribed principally for ulcers or people who have an acid condition in their stomach. A 30-day supply, if one goes and gets a prescription in Minneapolis, Minnesota, at almost any pharmacy, and it is not the pharmacist, they only get about a 3 or \$4 per-prescription fee on it, so it is not the pharmacist that is driving these prices. But a 30-day supply in Minnesota, Minneapolis, is \$99.95.

You buy that same prescription in Winnipeg, Manitoba for exactly the same drug manufactured by exactly the same company in exactly the same plant under the exact same FDA approval, you buy that drug, the Prilosec in Manitoba, and it is \$50.88. But if you go down to Mexico, you can buy exactly the same drug manufactured in exactly the same plant under the exact same FDA approval for \$17.50.

Let me read for my colleagues what George Halvorson who is the chairman of one of our larger HMOs in Minneapolis had to say, and this is a direct quote:

If we could only get half the price break that Canadians get, our plan alone could have saved our members nearly \$35 million last year.

Madam Speaker, I estimate that in Medicaid alone, the U.S. Government could save \$1.8 billion if we could get half the break that Canadians are currently getting for exactly the same drugs. This is not to mention the fact that we currently have 68 million prescriptions filled each year by the VA. Madam Speaker, we are talking about billions and billions of dollars that we could save if we would simply allow free market principles to work.

We currently have what is called the North American Free Trade Agreement. We allow goods and services to move freely across our borders. In some cases we lose. Sometimes our farmers, sometimes our hog producers, sometimes our ranchers are upset about the North American Free Trade Agreement. But it is interesting. The one thing that our own government blocks our own consumers from getting across the border is prescription drugs. In fact, when some of my constituents went up and actually used mail order to order prescription drugs from Canada, the FDA sent a letter to them. It is a very threatening letter. I would like to read just a couple of sentences from it. It says:

Dear Consumer:

This letter is to advise you that the Minneapolis District of the United States Food and Drug Administration has examined a package addressed to you containing drugs which appear to be unapproved for use in the United States.

Appear to be unapproved. These are the same drugs in the same boxes manufactured in the same plants. It is ridiculous. The problem is FDA interference. The story of Minnesota seniors

is being repeated all across the country.

The solution is a bill that I have introduced, H.R. 3240, the Drug Import Fairness Act, which is a bipartisan solution. We have literally Members from what some would say the far right and the far left who have joined together on this bill to put it clear to the FDA that they should not stand between our consumers and particularly senior citizens and lower drug prices. That effort has been joined now by a group out of Utah called the Life Extension Foundation. If Members have not received it yet, they will be receiving from our office or theirs a pamphlet which talks about the problem, explains the problem and then explains the solution.

Madam Speaker, let me just close by saying this. In the age of NAFTA, our own FDA should not stand between our citizens and lower prescription drug prices. Particularly, we should not allow the FDA to stand between our senior citizens and lower drug prices. These are FDA approved drugs. We have the North American Free Trade Agreement. It is time for Congress to take action to bring American prices down to the competitive world market prices.

HONORING CLIFF HOUSER, ACCOMPLISHED BUSINESSMAN, AND OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY LEADER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BARCIA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BARCIA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Cliff Houser, an accomplished businessman and an outstanding community leader who has worked tirelessly, not only to create jobs in our State but who has also given to our community and served our country with distinction. He is the embodiment of the entrepreneurial spirit and a testament to the notion that through hard work and perseverance, one can fulfill their dreams.

I have known Cliff for many years and can personally attest to his strong character, his strong commitment to his family and his dedication to civic duty. Cliff began his career in radio in 1965 in Flint, Michigan and later moved on to the television medium, WNEM-TV in Saginaw, Michigan. In 1968, he graduated from the John F. Kennedy Special Forces Center War College. He also attended the Aresty Institute of Executive Education within the Wharton School at the university of Pennsylvania.

When Cliff was asked to serve his country in the mid-1960s, he did so without hesitation and began his tour in Vietnam. As a field correspondent and as a producer for the Armed Forces Radio Network, he was often in harm's way. For his bravery, courage and serv-

ice, Cliff was awarded the Bronze Star, the National Defense Service Medal, two Asian Theater Citations and the Vietnam Commendation Medal, among others.

Upon returning to the United States after the war, Cliff utilized his keen business sense and cofounded Video Productions, Inc. in 1974. Four years later, he expanded his business by founding an advertising agency, Tel-Ad, Inc. Cliff had the foresight to combine the two agencies, forming an award-winning national full service advertising agency, Cliff Houser & Associates Advertising Corporation.

For the last 5 years, the company has grown to be one of the top 50 fastest growing, privately held companies in our State. In fact, his company is thriving nationwide. As the CEO of a successful business, Cliff taps into his boundless energy and is heavily involved in civic activities and community leadership. He was the 1997 Bay County March of Dimes chairman, the Tri-county Chairman for Easter seals, a past member of the Advising Board of the Bay City Board of Education, and the Teen Ranch of Michigan.

Cliff also invests his time in the business community and is involved with the Michigan Small Business Leadership Panel, on the board of directors of the Downtown Management Authority of Bay City and is a charter member of the Flint Area Advertising Federation, among other organizations.

While much of his time is devoted to his business and civic responsibilities, Cliff is also devoted very much to his family. He could not have achieved these accomplishments without the love and support of his family, including his wife Elizabeth and his three children, Chip, Bethany, and Jordan who are the joy and pride of his life.

Cliff also makes his spiritual growth a priority and is very active in his church. His great appreciation for nature and the outdoors has also fostered an avid interest in hunting and recreational boating. Madam Speaker, I can unequivocally state that our community, our State of Michigan, and our country is fortunate to have Cliff Houser as a neighbor and friend. I invite my colleagues to join with me in thanking Cliff for all his good work and congratulating him on the successes of his company, Cliff Houser & Associates Advertising Corporation.

MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY ELIMINATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise before this body and remind everyone of what we did last week that I think was very good for America. Last week, the House