

coming down to visit with us tonight. This is a very important issue.

Ultimately, if we open up the markets and we allow American consumers to have access to prescription drugs at world market prices, I believe that this simple little amendment, once fully implemented, could save American consumers \$30 billion.

I may be wrong, it may be \$28 billion, it may be \$31 billion, but even here in Washington, that is a lot of money. If one is a consumer that needs a drug, like that lady with that ointment, and one can save \$1,200 a year buying the same drug that comes from the same manufacturer from the same FDA-approved facility simply by picking up a phone and making a \$2 phone call to Ireland, I do not think we as public policymakers should stand idly by and allow our own FDA to stand between American consumers, and particularly American senior consumers, we should not and cannot stand idly by and allow our own FDA to stand between those people and lower prescription drug prices.

I just want to close with a few other points. Some say a Medicare drug benefit will eliminate the need for importation and open markets. Mr. Speaker, if we think about that argument for even a moment we will realize that simply shifting high drug prices to the government only transfers these huge pharmaceutical bills to the American taxpayers.

Moreover, Medicare coverage will not help the millions of Americans who currently have no prescription drug benefit. So simply shifting the burden of \$300 billion, or whatever the number we ultimately come up with, and I support expanding the Medicare program. In fact, I think the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE) has the best program in doing it through the Medicaid systems that every State already has in place.

But it is not an answer to just create a new entitlement funded by the Federal Government. If we do not get control of prices of prescription drugs, if we continue to allow what really amounts to unregulated monopolies, where American consumers, through the Tax Code, through the research dollars that taxpayers pay for and ultimately through the prices that they pay for, if we stand idly by and say, well, I guess American consumers have to pay for all of the research of all of the governments and all the other people of the rest of the world, then shame on us. Shame on us. We have an opportunity tomorrow to set the record straight.

We do not necessarily want price controls in the United States. We do not want a huge bureaucracy and more regulations. But we do want to have access to markets.

In a couple of weeks, we are going to have another great debate about free

trade. The President of the United States, I have supported giving the President what used to be called fast track trading authority. Now I think we have a somewhat different name, advanced trade authority or trade promotion authority. There is some other term for it.

Basically, I support giving the President more latitude to negotiate trade agreements. I support that idea. I support free markets.

However, Mr. Speaker, I support free markets when it comes to American consumers, too. We cannot just have free markets when it benefits large corporations, we have to have free markets when they benefit consumers, too.

This idea that we are going to stand idly by and allow American consumers to pay three, four, five, six, seven times more for the same prescription drugs in the Information Age, as they say back home, that dog will not hunt.

I do not know if we are going to win this debate tomorrow on the amendment or not. I do not know what is going to happen. We have given every good argument. We have talked about free trade, about safety, about prices, about how we can help American consumers.

I do not know whether we are going to win this amendment tomorrow, but we are going to fight a good fight. We are saying to the administration, it is time for them to decide, are they going to stand on the side of the big pharmaceutical industries? Are they going to defend an FDA bureaucracy which cannot even protect American consumers all that well from food-borne pathogens? Or are they going to stand with American consumers, stand with seniors?

I will say this, if the FDA decides that they want to take Grandma to court for trying to save an extra \$35 on a three-months' supply of coumadin, some of the people in this room are going to be there on the courthouse steps to meet them.

This is an important issue. It amounts to billions of dollars. It is the right thing to do. It is good policy, and ultimately, it means good things for American consumers.

Frankly, I think in the long light of history it will be good for the pharmaceutical industry, because it will force the Europeans to rethink their pricing structures. It will level the playing field. That is what we want to do, and we hope tomorrow, with the support of the Members of this Congress, we are going to get that done and send a clear message that we stand with American consumers, we stand with free markets.

It is time for us to say the subsidization of the starving Swiss must end.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FLAKE). Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I,

the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 45 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 2149

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. FLAKE) at 9 o'clock and 49 minutes p.m.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of attending a funeral for a family member.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of official business in the district.

Mr. PUTNAM (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for June 25 and the balance of the week on account of attending the birth of his first child.

Mr. PAUL (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today and the balance of the week on account of a death in the family.

Mr. TOOMEY (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today on account of travel delays.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today on account of travel delays.

Mr. WICKER (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today on account of travel delays.

Mr. CANNON (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today on account of family medical issues.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

The following Members (at the request of Mr. McNULTY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FILNER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MATHESON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. LANGEVIN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. RAHALL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CUMMINGS, for 5 minutes, today.

The following Member (at the request of Mr. FLAKE) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:

Mr. SIMMONS, for 5 minutes, July 12.

The following Member (at his own request) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material: