

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL  

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of  
AGING ORGANIZATIONS  
Edward F. Coyle, *Chair*

May 19, 2004

Dear Senator:

The undersigned members of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) are writing in support of S. 2328, the Pharmaceutical Market Access and Drug Safety Act of 2004. We commend the bi-partisan group of original co-sponsors for their leadership on this issue.

S. 2328 will allow individuals to safely buy prescription drugs from Canada -- and pharmacists and wholesalers to safely buy from the world's major industrialized nations-- at prices that will be substantially lower than domestic prices. Most importantly, the bill gives the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) necessary resources to ensure the safety of the imported drugs, while also preventing attempts to thwart the intent of the bill by forms of market manipulation.

As representatives of senior organizations, we have long been concerned that the increasing cost of prescription drugs has caused millions of consumers to go without the medicines they have been prescribed and/or has forced them to cut dosage, thus deviating from recommended courses of treatment. The double-digit rate of drug inflation has also been a major strain on state Medicaid budgets, forcing many states to cut back on coverage.

Because the new Medicare law does so little to restrain the rate of drug inflation, its benefit to seniors will rapidly erode. For example, according to the Congressional Budget Office, the 'doughnut hole' grows from \$2,850 in 2006 to \$5,044 in 2013, and the share of beneficiaries' income consumed by prescription drug costs will increase dramatically.

This bill will provide much-needed help to Medicare and Medicaid recipients. Individuals, states, state purchasing pools, and Medicare drug plans will all benefit. We urge you to co-sponsor this important bill. We look forward to working with you to pass S. 2328 this year.

Again, we thank the bi-partisan group of original co-sponsors for their leadership on this important national consumer issue.

Sincerely,

*AFL-CIO*  
*Alliance for Retired Americans*  
*American Federation of Teachers*  
*American Public Health Association*  
*Association for Gerontology and Human Development*  
*in Historically Black Colleges and Universities*  
*Association of Jewish Aging Services of North America*  
*B'nai B'rith International*  
*Eldercare America*  
*Experience Works*  
*FamiliesUSA*  
*Gray Panthers*  
*International Union, UAW*  
*National Adult Day Services Association*  
*National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers*  
*National Association of Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Directors*  
*National Association of Retired Federal Employees*  
*National Association of Senior Companion Project Directors*  
*National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs*  
*National Association of State Units on Aging*  
*National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare*  
*National Indian Council on Aging*  
*National Seniors Center Law Center*  
*OWL, the voice of midlife and older women*  
*Volunteers of America*