



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 354-A

Resolution calling upon pharmaceutical manufacturers not to limit the supply of prescription drugs available to Canadian mail-order pharmacies.

By Council Members DeBlasio, Gioia, Quinn, James, Brewer, Gentile, Gonzalez, Jennings, Liu, Lopez, Martinez, Monserrate, Nelson, Palma, Perkins, Reed, Sanders, Seabrook, Stewart and Weprin

Whereas, Medicare beneficiaries have historically been denied prescription drug coverage; though the Bush administration passed a coverage package, it will not yield benefits until 2006, and many deem its provisions inadequate; and

Whereas, The lack of prescription drug coverage coupled with the exorbitant price of necessary pharmaceuticals has forced many American senior citizens to purchase prescription drugs from Canada, where medicines can cost 30 to 75 percent less than they do in the United States; and

Whereas, Health industry analysts estimate that drug sales from Canada to the United States reached \$1.1 billion in 2003 but that this is a fraction of the \$216 billion total spent on prescription drugs in the United States; and

Whereas, Many Canadian mail-order pharmacies have met the growing demand from consumers in the United States by sending brand-name pharmaceuticals across the border in a practice known as “re-importation;” and

Whereas, Notwithstanding the need of American senior citizens, major pharmaceutical companies are beginning to cut off supplies to a number of Canadian mail-order pharmacies that “re-import” back to the United States; and

Whereas, Drug companies claim that this limitation is due to concerns that supplies may dwindle for

Canadian consumers but cannot explain why they do not opt to increase supply; and

Whereas, Though the Food and Drug Administration asserts that re-importation is illegal, it has not prosecuted individual customers for engaging in this practice; and

Whereas, A growing bipartisan group of local, state and federal legislators supports legalizing re-importation completely; and

Whereas, Governors of several states advocate re-importation as a solution to rising prescription drug expenditures and have begun to pursue pharmaceuticals from Canadian wholesalers to meet their citizens' prescription drug needs in a cost-efficient manner; and

Whereas, Governor Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota has testified before the United States Department of Health and Human Service's Taskforce of Drug Importation that the "pharmaceutical industry is explicitly retaliating against the pharmacies" that facilitate re-importation to Minnesota consumers; and

Whereas, Minnesota Attorney General Mike Hatch has filed an antitrust law suit against GlaxoSmithKline over its decision to limit supply to Canadian re-importers; and

Whereas Advocates report that drug companies disclosed sales of \$219 billion in 2003 and that in the last Presidential election the drug industry made \$20 million in federal campaign contributions; and

Whereas, Elected officials must do all they can to ensure the safe and affordable supply of life-saving prescription drugs to senior citizens; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon pharmaceutical manufacturers not to limit the supply of prescription drugs available to Canadian mail-order pharmacies.

T.S.F.
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