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May 7, 2021

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richie Neal
Chairman
House Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Chairman
House Committee on Education and Labor
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Pallone, Neal, and Scott:

AARP, on behalf of our 38 million members and all older Americans, is pleased to support H.R. 3, the *Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act*. This important legislation is a critical step toward lowering prescription drug prices and improving Medicare for seniors and families across the country.

Every day, we hear about the tough decisions older Americans face as drug prices continue to skyrocket. Medicare beneficiaries, on average, take between four and five prescription medications each month and have a median income of just over \$26,000 a year. They simply can't afford skyrocketing prescription drug prices. In 2018, the price of prescription drugs widely used by older Americans increased at twice the rate of inflation. In fact, drug prices have increased faster than inflation every year for at least the last decade. Many older Americans with chronic conditions will face these increasingly high costs every year for the rest of their lives.

Moreover, high and growing drug prices are affecting all Americans in some way. Their cost is passed along to everyone with health coverage through increased health care premiums, deductibles, and other forms of cost-sharing. This is not only financially challenging for people

who need these medicines, it is an unsustainable burden on taxpayers, as these high drug prices drain revenue from programs like Medicare and Medicaid.

AARP supports H.R. 3 because it would help individuals and families afford their medications by lowering drug prices and capping out-of-pocket costs. The bill requires Medicare to negotiate for lower prices on high cost drugs that do not face competition and it allows people with private insurance to take advantage of those lower prices. It protects seniors by creating a much-needed out-of-pocket cap in Part D. Finally, H.R. 3 would crack down on drug companies that price gouge older Americans with relentless price increases, forcing them to choose between taking their medicine and paying their bills.

AARP continues to strongly support efforts to improve the Medicare program by adding coverage for dental, hearing, and vision. The lack of coverage for these issues can jeopardize the health of older Americans and drives up other health care spending. With the Medicare savings generated by H.R. 3, Congress must seize this opportunity to strengthen and support Medicare.

It is long past time for Congress to take action to rein in high drug prices. H.R. 3 will help ensure that more Americans have affordable access to the prescription drugs that they need to get and stay healthy. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues in Congress to enact this legislation and to add essential coverage – including hearing, dental, and vision benefits – to Medicare.

Sincerely,



Nancy A. LeaMond
Executive Vice President and
Chief Advocacy and Engagement Officer