



March 5, 2019

Representative Will Guzzardi  
Chairman, Prescription Drug Affordability & Accessibility Committee  
Stratton Office Building  
Springfield, IL 62706

cc: Representative Anna Moeller

*RE:* Wholesale Importation of Prescription Drugs Act (HB 1441)

Dear Representative Guzzardi,

As a representative of the 28 million small businesses in America and the more than 1.2 million in Illinois, Small Business Majority writes today to urge you to support the Wholesale Importation of Prescription Drugs Act (HB 1441), which would create a program to provide lower cost prescription drugs from regulated Canadian suppliers to Illinois consumers. We believe this legislation will help millions of healthcare consumers in Illinois, including many small business owners and solo-entrepreneurs.

Small Business Majority is a national small business organization, with an office in Chicago representing Illinois entrepreneurs, founded and run by small business owners to ensure America's entrepreneurs are a key part of a thriving and inclusive economy. We actively engage small business owners and policymakers in support of solutions that promote small business growth and drive a strong economy. A key component of our work involves outreach and education to small business owners on a range of small business issues, including healthcare, retirement security, access to capital and more.

The high cost of prescription drugs is a serious concern to small business owners. Small Business Majority's scientific opinion polling found that 88% of small business owners who offer health insurance plans to their employees say drug prices are too high, and many feel the high cost is impacting their bottom lines. What's more, nearly two-thirds (63%) of small employers say the prescription drug market is in need of reform.<sup>1</sup>

Total spending in the U.S. on prescription drugs rose 41% between 2007 and 2017, from \$236 billion to \$333 billion, according to data from the National Health Expenditure survey.<sup>2</sup> This is an issue too many small employers are facing on a daily basis—more than 8 in 10 small business owners say their prescription drug copays have increased in recent years. Roughly 4 in 10 say their primary strategy for managing those increasing drug copay costs are to shift some of the higher costs to employees (39%), while 31% say they absorb the higher costs and try to maintain the same health insurance benefits. For small businesses operating on tight profit margins, this can be an extremely difficult decision to make.

The Wholesale Importation of Prescription Drugs Act would make considerable strides in addressing these affordability issues. The bill would require that Illinois's Department of Public Health become a wholesale importer of Canadian prescription drugs, with regulations that would ensure imported drugs met safety and licensing requirements. Our opinion polling shows this proposal is strongly supported by small business owners, with 85% agreeing that Americans should be allowed to purchase prescription drugs from Canada.

We call upon the Illinois legislature to enact HB 1441 to reduce healthcare costs for small business owners struggling to afford rising prescription drug prices. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Geri Aglipay, Illinois Outreach Manager  
Small Business Majority

<sup>1</sup> <http://smallbusinessmajority.org/our-research/healthcare/small-business-owners-concerned-rising-cost-prescription-drugs>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2019/01/07/682986630/prescription-drug-costs-driven-by-manufacturer-price-hikes-not-innovation>