

HB 2852 - OPPOSE

Dear Oklahoma Representative:

The concept of drug importation is not a new one. State legislatures and the federal government have examined all aspects of importation for many years and always conclude that the risks greatly outweigh any benefits. With an importation measure currently being considered in your session, we are writing to express our collective concern.

The U.S. drug supply is unquestionably the safest in the world because of the safeguards we have in place. In contrast, the World Health Organization estimates that 10 percent of the drugs worldwide are counterfeit. Thus, it is no surprise that the FDA now performs 10 times more investigations than it did 20 years ago to protect us and ensure the veracity and safety of our medications.

Those who support the idea often say that there is no risk if these medicines come from a "safe" country, such as Canada or select countries in the European Union. In fact, Canadian authorities have said they are not responsible for the safety or quality of prescription drugs that are exported from Canada into the US. That is because Canadian law does not prohibit the transshipment of drugs from any country – including developing and third world countries – into Canada and then into the United States, thus underscoring our concerns about the safety and reliability of these medicines.

Implementation and enforcement are costly, impractical and, in some cases, impossible. A recent report issued by the Vermont Agency of Human Services raises a concern that the program to import medicines from select pharmacies in Canada will likely come at substantial cost to the state, and operating expense may eclipse any commercial insurer savings ([Wholesale Importation Program for Prescription Drugs Legislative Report](#)).

There are many reasons why counterfeit drugs have become so prevalent. The simple answer is because there is a lot of money to be made and the penalties for selling counterfeit drugs are frequently far less severe than the penalties for selling illegal drugs. Technology has made sales much easier for criminals to masquerade their location and source. Moreover, regulations in other parts of the world make documentation requirements like we have here difficult to duplicate and therefore complicate any system that is set up.

With importation, there is no guarantee that drugs will be cheaper. You can, however, be certain they will be riskier. We, the undersigned, ask your reconsideration of this well-intentioned but deeply flawed, potentially dangerous idea.

Signed,

Oklahoma State Grange
Allergy & Asthma Network
American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association
American Behcet's Disease Association (ABDA)
Caregiver Action Network
Caregiver Voices United
International Pain Foundation
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
Men's Health Network
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)
National Consumers League
National Grange
National Minority Quality Forum
Neuropathy Action Foundation

Pharmacists United for Truth and Transparency
RetireSafe
Veterans Health Council
Vietnam Veterans of America