



**Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Public Health
In support of H.1154 An Act to Reduce Drug Costs Through Transparency
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Americans are increasingly being hurt by outrageous medication costs. Medications should be used to save lives and cure diseases, not provide excessive profit for the pharmaceutical industry. Over the past several years, the cost of medications, even generics, have sky-rocketed, and it is becoming increasingly difficult for patients to afford the medications they need. It is sad when a patient suffers a disease with no existing treatment, but it is sadder still to suffer one that has existing treatment that is not affordable.

It is time to demand that pharmaceutical companies open their books and make their pricing more transparent. We cannot afford to stand idly any longer while patients suffer because they cannot afford their medications. Drug companies need to do their part in alleviating suffering. The pharmaceutical companies might shy away from raising prices if they knew the public was watching.

This bill would provide an immediate benefit to consumers by prohibiting pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) companies from placing “gag orders” on retail pharmacies and would allow retail pharmacists to inform consumers if it would be cheaper for them to pay the retail price for a prescription than to use their insurance and to let consumers know about less expensive alternatives to their prescription. It would require pharmacies to post a notice that such information is available.

It would also add pharmacy benefit managers to existing state laws governing health insurance providers and other health care companies. The three largest PBMs currently control 78% of prescription drug transactions in the US. PBMs do not disclose the prices they have negotiated with manufacturers of prescription drugs, allowing them to resell drugs above those negotiated prices.

[At least 20 states](#) have implemented some form of drug price transparency laws, according to the *National Academy of State Health Policy*. The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, representing 47 local Leagues from Cape Cod to the Berkshires, supports joining their ranks by passing this bill.

Thank you for your consideration.