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GREGG INTRODUCES BILL TO ALLOW FOR SAFE IMPORTATION OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS FROM CANADA

WASHINGTON—Senator Judd Gregg, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, today introduced a bill that will allow for importation of prescription drugs from Canada and other countries and establish new protections to make sure consumers are making informed choices and getting safe medicines both in their local pharmacies and online.

The legislation is also sponsored by Senators Gordon Smith (OR), Susan Collins (ME), Norm Coleman (MN), Trent Lott (MS) and Jeff Sessions (AL).

“America’s patients are paying for the world’s research,” Gregg said. “Brand name drugs cost 40 to 80 percent less in Canada than in the United States. As a result, patients are crossing borders and turning to rogue internet pharmacies in an effort to afford their medicine. But these marketplaces are perilous. Patients are getting drugs that are unsafe either because they differ in content or potency, or are outright counterfeits.

“It would be irresponsible to ignore the public health consequences of the status quo,” Gregg said.

“This bill opens our borders for the first time to prescription drugs, introduces more safety and oversight into the marketplace, and gives the Food and Drug Administration the tools and resources it needs to make sure the job is done right.”

Gregg cautioned that Congress could not ignore questions of safety or be hasty in its efforts. “We cannot take the fast and furious approach to this issue. Patients should not be forced to trade safety for affordability. Allowing any product, from anywhere into our medicine cabinets is not the right prescription for patients.”

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The Safe Importing of Medical Products and RX Therapies Act (Safe IMPORT Act) would:

- Allow individuals to legally import FDA-approved prescription drug products, effective immediately.
- Allow within one year importation of commercial quantities of FDA-approved prescription drugs by pharmacies and wholesalers, providing patients access to lower-priced drugs at their neighborhood pharmacies. Imported drugs must be labeled, ensuring patients are making informed choices.
- Allow within three years commercial imports from up to 15 approved European Union countries.
- Ensure that Internet pharmacies are legitimate, licensed and accountable. Requires online pharmacies to be registered. Credit card companies would be prohibited from authorizing sales to non-registered internet pharmacies.
- Provide the FDA the same authority it has over imported food, ensuring that legally imported prescription drug products meet the FDA gold standard of safety.