



## NRLN Review, Summary for April 2021

The NRLN Review provides a monthly report on National Retiree Legislative Network actions, events in Congress and important retirement news.

### **NRLN Action Alert – Allow Importation of Drugs from Canada**

For several years the NRLN has lobbied for legislation that would lower the cost of medicines by allowing the importation of safe, lower cost prescription drugs from Canada. An NRLN Action Alert was issued on April 6 requesting that members urge their U.S. Representative and Senators to pass **H.R. 832 / S. 259, Safe and Affordable Drugs from Canada Act of 2021**.

The bill would require the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to set regulations within 180 days permitting Americans to import prescription drugs from licensed Canadian pharmacies. The bill stipulates there must be a valid prescription issued by a U.S. physician for drugs for personal use and not greater than a 90-day supply. The drugs must have the same active ingredients, route administration, dosage form and strength as a prescription approved by the FDA.

Few issues have been debated more on Capitol Hill over the past years than prescription drug prices. Talk Is Cheap – Drugs Are Not! Passage of H.R. 832 / S. 259 would help make many prescription drugs more affordable for Americans.

### **NRLN President's Forum – NRLN Report Card Enhanced**

In an April 19 NRLN President's Forum Message, Bill Kadereit thanked Bob Martina, NRLN Vice President – Grassroots, and the Grassroots Committee members Cindy Hadsell and Ray Sternot for their efforts to enhance the NRLN Report Card.

The Report Card, created by the NRLN a few years ago, shows the bills the NRLN is supporting and opposing in the 117th Congress. It shows whether the Senators and the Representatives for a state are a cosponsor of the bills. Few, if any, other retiree organizations provide similar information.

The improvements to the Report Card include using colors to designate whether a legislator is a cosponsor of bills the NRLN supports or opposes. Also, a dash was added to show if a Senator's or Representative's position is unknown on the bill. These changes make it easier for a reviewer of the Report Card to quickly understand if the lawmaker's have taken a position as a cosponsor.

Kadereit urged NRLN members to check the Report Card on their state's Congressional delegation periodically to learn where their Senators and Representative stand on bills the NRLN supports or opposes.

Click here to access the NRLN Report. <https://www.nrln.org/SE.html/congresslegs.html#/legislators> Then click on your state on the USA map. When the webpage with your state's members of Congress appears, click on

EXCEL DOWNLOAD. When the download is complete, click on Enable Editing for the bills' titles to appear. If you want more information on the bills, click on a bill's title and you will access more information. If you have a problem with this link, go to [www.nrln.org](http://www.nrln.org) and click on the Legislative Action Network tab.

## **NRLN President's Forum – Advancing Education on Biosimilars Act Passed**

President Biden signed into law on April 23 S.164, Advancing Education on Biosimilars Act of 2021, which will help increase competition and lower the cost of biologic medicines.

NRLN President Bill Kadereit sent a letter to House Speaker Pelosi on April 5 requesting that she call for a vote on S.164 which was passed in the Senate on March 3. He stated in his letter "this is an opportunity to get something done immediately."

The House passed the bill on April 14 and sent it on April 20 to the President.

The new law will enhance education about biosimilar drug products in an effort to increase competition and lower the cost of biologic medicines which treat chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis and certain cancers.

Read entire Forum message at [www.nrln.com](http://www.nrln.com).

## **NRLN Legislative Committees' Work**

The NRLN's Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) composed of Judy Stenberg, Chairwoman, Deb Morrisett, Joe Mazzei, Al Duscher and Bob Martina submitted the following bills for the Legislative Action Planning Committee (LAPC) to consider for action during its April 5 conference call. The LAPC composed of Bill Kadereit, Chairman, Alyson Parker, Judy Stenberg, Bob Martina and Ed Beltram made the following decisions.

**H.R. 832 / S. 259, Safe and Affordable Drugs from Canada Act of 2021** would require the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to promulgate regulations permitting Americans to import a prescription drug purchased from licensed Canadian pharmacies.

-- NRLN Action Alert was issued on April 6 to urge Representatives and Senators to pass **H.R. 832 / S. 259**.

**H.R. 1106, Help Extend Auditory Relief (HEAR) Act of 2021**, would provide for Medicare coverage of hearing rehabilitation services and hearing aids.

-- Letters requesting a vote on **H.R. 1106** in the House Committee on Energy and Commerce were emailed on April 5 to Chairman Frank Pallone (NJ-06) and Ranking Member Cathy Rodgers (WA-05).

**S. 141, End Taxpayer Subsidies for Drug Ads Act**, would prohibit pharmaceutical drug manufacturers from claiming tax deductions for expenses on advertising directly to consumers. Advertising also increases demand for drugs and allows drug companies to increase prices.

-- Letters requesting a vote on **S. 141** in the Senate Committee on Finance were emailed on April 5 to Chairman Ron Wyden (OR) and Ranking Member Michael Crapo (ID).

**S.164, Advancing Education on Biosimilars Act of 2021**, would enhance education about biosimilar drug products in an effort to increase competition and lower the cost of biologic medicines. Independent studies have estimated that biologics could save Americans potentially \$54 billion over 10 years in healthcare costs. The Senate passed S.164 on March 3 and sent the bill to the House.

-- A letter requesting a House vote on **S. 164** was emailed on April 5 to Speaker Nancy Pelosi. (The House passed the bill on April 14 and the President signed it into law on April 23.)

**H.R.599, Protecting Medicare Beneficiaries with Pre-Existing Conditions Act.** The LAPC asked Alyson Parker, NRLN Executive Director, to investigate whether this bill expands guaranteed issue rights with respect to Medigap policies (Medicare supplemental health insurance policies) to all beneficiaries regardless of age. (Guaranteed issue rights require that a policy be offered to any eligible applicant without regard to health status.) Or does the bill only provide “guarantee issue” of a Medicare supplemental insurance plan (Medigap) to Medicare beneficiaries under 65 (those who are disabled)? Also, does it only allow Medicare Advantage enrollees switching to traditional Medicare a one-time enrollment in a Medigap plan without underwriting for a pre-existing health condition?

The LAC informed the LAPC on:

- S.547 -- a bill to provide relief for multiemployer and single employer pension plans (no action required since this was covered in Public Law 117-2)
- No action required:
  - S.589 -- a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to reform the treatment of multiemployer plans, to ensure the ability of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation to provide guaranteed benefits of retirees (similar to the multiemployer language in Public Law 117-2)
- Requires LAPC review but LAC recommends Table and Monitor:
  - S.234 -- Americans Giving Care to Elders (AGE) Act of 2021
- Table and Monitor the following COVID-19 bills without white papers:
  - H.R.975
  - H.R.1677
  - S.620

## **Key News Articles Posted in April**

During April 72 links to news articles related to retirement issues were researched and posted daily IN THE NEWS on the NRLN website home page. The headlines below are links to the articles. Or, read the articles at [www.nrln.org](http://www.nrln.org) under IN THE NEWS in the right column. Scroll down and click on the headline to access the article you want to read. Below are examples of the headlines.

### **White House Seeks To Expand Medicaid Coverage For Home Health Services – April 1**

*Inclusion Of H.R. 3 Drug Price Control Measures In Infrastructure Bill May Negatively Impact Drug Industry – April 4*

### **Congress should be required to vote yearly on an 'all-inclusive' budget – April 6**

*What's in Biden's Tax Plan? – April 7*

### **The best way to tackle drug prices – April 8**

*Why Is Healthcare So Expensive? Blame The Lobbyists – April 9*

### **Can Biden's Push for a Public Option Lower Your Healthcare Costs? – April 11**

*Sanders Proposal Brings Medicare Closer To The Brink Of Collapse – April 12*

### **Biden Seeks \$400 Billion to Buttress Long-Term Care. A Look at What's at Stake. – April 12**

*Opinion: Why an infrastructure for aging is good for America – April 13*

### **Biden signs into law delay of Medicare payment sequester cuts for rest of 2021 – April 14**

*Survey Finds Consumers in Pain Over High Prescription Prices, In Need of Better Tools – April 15*

### **Republican Senators Push Social Security, Medicare And Medicaid Cuts After Supporting Ineffective Tax Cuts – April 16**

*Legislation to Shore Up Social Security Resurfaces – April 19*

### **Congress Isn't Finished Coming After Your Retirement Money And Estate – April 19**

*Bipartisan plan to fix Social Security draws criticism – April 20*

### **Pelosi Faces Pushback From Biden, Dems In Effort To Tackle Drug Prices – April 23**

*House Democrats push Biden to lower Medicare eligibility age – April 26*

### **Which States Will Gain or Lose Seats in the Next Congress – April 26**

*Social Security's cost-of-living adjustment isn't keeping up with prices retirees pay – April 27*

### **Biden promises no new taxes on anyone making less than \$400,000. Experts doubt he can keep that pledge – April 28**

*Biden calls on Congress to pass drug pricing legislation this year – April 28*

**What Biden's latest moves could signal for Social Security reform efforts – April 30**