

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The House of Representatives today passed H.R. 4, the Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act of 2007. Representative Xavier Becerra (CA-31), Assistant to the Speaker and the only member of Congress from Southern California on the House Ways and Means Committee, voted for this critical legislation.

Upon Senate approval and the signature of the President, H.R. 4 will improve access to prescription drugs by mandating that the secretary of Health and Human Services negotiate for lower drug prices and requires the secretary to issue regular progress reports to Congress.

The bill is supported by dozens of organizations, including AARP, National Community Pharmacists Association, Association of Community Pharmacists, National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, Center for Medicare Advocacy, Medicare Rights Center, Leadership Council of Aging Organizations, Families USA, and the Consumers Union.

Shortly before passage, Rep. Becerra spoke in favor of the bill on the floor of the House. Below are highlights from his speech:

“From the sound of it coming from our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, you would think that prescription drug prices were a great deal. I did some research. I took a look at a couple of popular drugs, Lipitor, which is for cholesterol; Clarinex, which is for allergies; and I figured out the average price you could get out there from any pharmacy and it turns out to be \$733 per gram for Clarinex and \$279 a gram for Lipitor.

HOUSE VOTES TO REQUIRE MEDICARE TO NEGOTIATE LOWER DRUG PRICES

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“If these are such good prices, how do they compare to illicit drugs you can find on the street? According to a U.N. report on drugs and crime, cocaine has a street value of \$112 per gram and \$95 per gram for heroin. If you take a look at what’s going on today, it’s a greater price that you pay – four, five times to help save a senior’s life – than a drug that you abuse on the streets. Let’s try to negotiate the price down and fix this broken system.”



[Click here](#) to view Rep. Becerra’s entire floor speech.

Becerra.House.gov