UNITED STATES SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON

AGING

RANKING MEMBER KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND

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Ranking Member Kirsten Gillibrand's Opening Statement
"Behind the Label: Foreign Ownership and Control in America's Drug Supply Chain"

Thank you, Chairman Scott, for today's hearing. Thank you to our witnesses. We appreciate your expertise and testimony. As the Aging Committee continues to examine a range of factors that put seniors' access to essential medicines at risk, we keep hearing the outsized influence of foreign actors on our drug supply chain.

We know that America relies too heavily on China and India for the foundational components to manufacture generic drugs, the key starting materials and the active pharmaceutical ingredients. And it is troubling how foreign actors continue to deepen their impact by expanding ownership, investment, and control of our supply chain.

This poses a significant risk to the American public, especially because we currently do not and cannot see the full extent of our upstream dependency on foreign actors within the supply chain. This is in part because these countries try to disguise their involvement and influence in ways that our witnesses will discuss later in the hearing.

But it also happens because we need stronger tools to understand, evaluate, and manage these modern supply chain risks. We must bolster Federal oversight efforts and increase transparency on how foreign capital impacts American health care infrastructure. This will strengthen our health and national security without discouraging trusted investment.

I am proud to support the work Chairman Scott and Senator Warren do with their Pharmaceutical Investment Oversight and Accountability Act, but we also have to align policy goals and targeted investments to diminish foreign dominance in our drug supply chain and maintain our global leadership in biopharmaceutical innovation.

This involves addressing market factors in the U.S. that have led to a race to the bottom for generic drugs. Congress must work with industry to make sure manufacturers and purchasers consider quality, not just cost, when they source key pharmaceutical ingredients and final dose medicines.

Foreign countries like China have rapidly scaled up innovation for novel therapies through efforts like clinical trial reform, targeted government investment in drug development, and improved coordination between early research and commercial-scale manufacturing.

While we do not need to exactly replicate the steps they have taken, we must acknowledge that they are moving at a much faster pace than we are, increasing our dependence on their clinical trials and components for essential medicines. We can't let foreign actors, much less our adversaries, surpass us in innovation. It will only increase our reliance and deepen their control over crucial American health infrastructure and supply chains.

I look forward to hearing from our expert witnesses today. I am committed to working with my colleagues to improve our tools to understand, evaluate, and manage modern supply chain risks so we can strengthen our health and national security. Thank you.