



Chairman's Opening Remarks September 23rd Hearing

"The U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging will now come to order.

Over the past year, this committee has sounded the alarm on the dangers of America's overreliance on foreign adversaries for our medicines.

We've heard from patient advocates, researchers, and manufacturers about their concerns and how it's putting our families at risk every single day.

One thing is clear: there is an urgent need to address our dependence on Communist China and India for drugs, and that starts with making safe medicines here in America.

This week, the Trump administration announced a great step towards further investing in America's drug manufacturing. I'm glad to know the Trump administration is taking action.

Now we need to see more American companies getting contracts with federal agencies to make drugs here in America. That's the test.

We need to see urgency in both the executive and legislative branches to make changes that end America's dependency on Communist China for prescription drugs.

I'm proud that the CLEAR LABELS Act, which I am leading with Ranking Member Gillibrand, passed the HELP Committee almost unanimously in July. I expect it to get a vote on the Senate floor before the end of this year.

That would not happen but it not for Senator Gillibrand's hard work on it also.

We must pass this bill and make sure Americans know where their drugs are made. Here's why I am so fired up about getting this done.

America now makes just 27 percent of the medicine it consumes. Things we put into our bodies. In 2002 that figure was 72 percent. We have almost completely lost our ability to make generic drugs in this country.

This was no accident; this is the result of decades of Washington's failure to combat Communist China's control of what's in your medicine cabinet and the drugs we put in our bodies.

Manufacturers in Communist China and India are cheating. We've seen them falsify records as we saw with Ranbaxy, present fake conditions to FDA inspectors in preannounced inspections, and cut corners on quality for medicines that people's health and lives depend on.

Just recently, the Chinese equivalent of FDA leadership got convicted for taking bribes to approve ineffective drugs. Communist China does not play fair, and they couldn't care less about our safety and well-being. We cannot take chances by relying on them for medicines.

We also know that foreign manufacturers get to the market fastest by undercutting American manufacturers that are complying with the FDA's approval and inspection processes.

That can be fixed.

The federal government should not reward that. The FDA needs to treat this as both a national security and safety issue, and Congress needs to give the FDA the tools it needs to support domestic manufacturing and the highest quality of manufacturing here in the USA.

The federal government should support policies that bring drug manufacturing back without patients and health systems having to face higher prices. And they can.

One example is the first-to-file reform proposal in the FDA's FY2027 budget request. Market-based solutions like this would give American manufacturers the first chance to become the exclusive manufacturer of drugs going off patent by giving them a one-month head start. By the way, what do you think China is doing?

This proposal would have a huge impact, giving American manufacturers a chance to compete on an even playing field and sending a much-needed signal to industry to invest and manufacture here long term.

Other ideas such as CMS' proposed rule to reimburse more for drugs made in America are a great step in the right direction.

The time for action is now.

We can't let issues like permitting and government bureaucracy stop manufacturing from coming back to this country. The government needs to take an all-hands-on-deck

approach to cut red tape so that we can make medicines here in America and save and protect American lives.

American manufacturers can compete on quality and cost, and I'm committed to working with Ranking Member Gillibrand and the Trump administration to make changes happen so they have a fair shot at bringing manufacturing back to our country.

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