



Vote yes on Senate Bill 20-119

Expand Canadian Prescription Drug Import Program by

Senator Joann Ginal and Representative Sonya Jaquez Lewis

AARP CO Testimony on SB20-119

February 13, 2020

By Dr. Shirley J Leow

Madam Chair and Committee Members, I am Dr. Shirley Leow, an AARP CO Volunteer Legislative Advocate. I am here representing more than 680,000 AARP members who are strongly supportive of initiatives to lower out-of-pocket drug costs and prescription accessibility, such as SB20-119.

AARP was very supportive of SB19-005 last session, which gave the state authority to develop a statewide wholesale drug importation program. We were supportive because Americans pay the highest prescription drug prices in the world.

The US supply chain security is allegedly the worldwide gold standard and about 60% of US prescription drugs are manufactured ex-US, mostly in India and China. (GAO 12/10/19 report). Eighty percent of all prescription ingredients are manufactured ex-US and imported. In response to this dynamic shift in country of manufacture, the US FDA beginning in 2016 increased its inspections of foreign manufacturing facilities while decreasing the domestic inspections. One hundred and sixty-four countries are members of the International Standards Organization. The members participate in standards creation, reviews and revision. China, Ecuador, India and Syria, for example, follow the identical standards as the USA. Nobody wants unsafe drugs.

In our view the value of drug importation under SB20-119 is to increase access and affordability for consumers. Expanding the number of countries for potential importation, promises the opportunity for affordable medications to those Coloradans in need. This demand is especially acute for our seniors who account for greater than 34% of all prescription medications and 30% of over-the-counter use. The average senior is taking four chronic drugs.

AARP supports expansion of the state drug importation legislation to ensure there are opportunities for lower costs to consumers. We in AARP CO appreciate your ongoing efforts to explore new and creative avenues to curb the increasing price of prescription drugs. We strongly support SB20-119 and urge this committee to move this bill forward with a favorable recommendation.

Thank you