



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters and Editors
Re: Drug Importation Reports to Congress
Da: Tuesday, Dec. 21, 2004

Today the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Commerce released reports on drug importation. The HHS report can be obtained at <http://www.hhs.gov/importtaskforce/>. The Department of Commerce report can be obtained at <http://www.ita.doc.gov/td/chemicals/drugpricingstudy.pdf>. These reports, as mandated by the *Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003*, analyze the feasibility of a nationwide prescription drug importation scheme as well as the impact of foreign price controls on pharmaceutical research and development. In particular, the Commerce study indicates that U.S. consumers are paying 18 percent to 67 percent more for popular on-patent drugs than consumers in other developed nations.

Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, made the following comment on today's reports.

"The reports are helpful contributions to the importation debate and provide a useful and thoughtful overview of the trade and health issues involved in implementing a drug importation system in the United States. These reports raise important issues that Congress should examine in its efforts to develop a safe system for the importation of drugs. American consumers are demanding lower prices on prescription drugs, and I believe that legalizing the importation of prescription drugs under conditions that ensure safety is the right thing to do.

"Recently I've spoken a lot about the safety of drugs under the Food and Drug Administration's watch. Safety is of paramount concern. We must not undermine the safety of the drug distribution system on which consumers rely for their prescriptions. Congress must ensure that FDA has the resources it would need to oversee a safe system for drug importation.

"Prescription drugs from other developed nations can be imported in a safe and effective manner with the proper tools and proper funding. I'm committed to working with my colleagues in the 109th Congress to move legislation through the Senate to accomplish this goal."