On May 16th, 2019, the Strengthening Health Care and Lowering Prescription Drug Costs Act (H.R. 987) was passed in the House of Representatives with a vote of 234 to 183 and sent to the Senate.

H.R. 987 lowers prescription drug prices and reverses some of the sabotage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). It blocks short-term health insurance plans, improves ACA enrollment, and lowers insurance costs for people with pre-existing conditions. Five million Americans aged 50 to 64 have at least one pre-existing health condition. The prescription drug price measures included in H.R. 987 accomplish the following:

**Implements the CREATES Act**
This provision will bring more low-cost generic medicines to market. It allows generic drug manufacturers to purchase samples of brand-name drugs, so they can confirm that their version of a drug is biologically similar to the brand name drug. Today brand-name pharmaceutical corporations can prevent generic manufacturers from buying samples of their most well-known drugs.

**Bans “Pay-for-Delay” Agreements**
This provision makes “Pay-for-Delay” agreements between prescription drug manufacturers illegal. According to the U.S. Federal Trade Commission, “pay-for-delay” agreements cost American taxpayers and consumers $3.5 billion every year by keeping drug prices high. Currently, brand name pharmaceutical corporations can offer generic companies patent settlement payments that keep lower-cost generics off the market.

**Stops Generic Companies from Keeping a Drug Off the Market**
The BLOCKING Act provisions shorten the amount of time it takes to get generic drugs on the market. Today, the first generic filers to obtain FDA approval for a drug are granted 180 days of market exclusivity. During this time period no other generic manufacturer can bring the same drug to market. However, some generic companies don’t release the drugs immediately after gaining approval, a practice called “parking.” H.R. 987 prohibits companies from “parking” their market exclusivity.