COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY & COMMERCE
DEMOCRATS
RANKING MEMBER FRANK PALLONE, JR.
NEWS

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Pallone's Opening Statement at Full Committee Markup

Washington, D.C. – *Energy and Commerce Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) delivered the following opening remarks at a Full Committee markup of 15 bills including the FDA Reauthorization Act of 2017:*

Today, the Committee will consider 15 bills, including the FDA Reauthorization Act of 2017.

We will begin by marking up eleven bipartisan energy bills, most of which were passed overwhelmingly by the House last Congress. I support these bills, and commend Chairmen Walden and Upton for working with us on them.

That said, in the wake of President Trump's disastrous decision to pull our nation out of the Paris Climate Accord last week, the burden now lies with Republicans in Congress – and this Committee in particular – to work with us to come up with real climate solutions. For many on this side of the aisle, policies and proposals that may have been acceptable last Congress are no longer going to cut it in a world where the U.S. is no longer participating in the Paris accord.

Notwithstanding President Trump's assault on public health, clean energy jobs and the environment, I am pleased that the Majority agreed to markup Ranking Member Rush's bill to promote a 21st Century Energy and Manufacturing Workforce. I'm also encouraged that we will consider Rep. Peters' Hydropower Permit Extension HYPE Act, and nine non-controversial energy bills.

I also support H.R. 1222, the Congenital Heart Futures Reauthorization Act, and H.R. 2410, the Sickle Cell Disease Research, Surveillance, Prevention and Treatment Act. Both of these bills are bipartisan measures that aim to improve outcomes for people with serious health conditions.

And I want to voice my support for H.R. 1492, which would allow registered physicians to transport controlled substances from one practice location to another.

Finally, we are considering critical legislation to reauthorize FDA's medical product user fee programs. This legislation, in combination with the negotiated commitments from FDA and industry, provide FDA with the resources and personnel necessary to ensure the timely review of medical products. This important legislation will also enable the agency to undertake activities that will better incorporate the patient perspective in the regulatory process, advance regulatory science and support the modernization of the clinical trial and review process.

The reauthorization of FDA user fee programs have always been approved in a strong, bipartisan fashion. I'm hopeful that tradition will continue again this year so the medical product review process will continue uninterrupted. This is a critical process that ensures patients and families have access to the innovative medical treatments they need to live longer and more productive lives.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to conclude by once again asking that you hold a hearing on the rising costs of prescription drugs. I made this same request when this legislation was marked up in subcommittee. Drug prices continue to rise at an alarming rate, and the American people are rightfully demanding action. A recent national poll found that six in ten Americans believe lowering the costs of prescription drugs should be a top priority for the President and Congress. I agree. Ensuring patient access to affordable and innovative prescription drugs should be a top priority of this committee, and therefore I once again request that this Committee hold hearings to examine rising drugs costs.

I look forward to our discussion on these bills, and hope they can each advance with strong, bipartisan support.

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