



Testimony of Matthew Netto, AARP Rhode Island

In support of House Bill 7214

House Judiciary Committee

January 29, 2026

Chairwoman Hagan McEntee and members of the House Judiciary Committee:

AARP is a nonpartisan, social mission organization with 38 million members nationwide and nearly 125,000 members here in Rhode Island. We advocate on behalf of issues that impact older adults, and we appreciate the opportunity to offer our support for preventing the price gouging of prescription drugs in times of a market emergency or market shortage as proposed in Representative Lombardi's House Bill 7214.

For years, prescription drug price increases have dwarfed even the highest rates of general inflation. Between July 2021 and July 2022 alone, big drug companies raised list prices faster than inflation on more than 1,200 prescription drugs – rising an average of 31.6%. Some drugs in 2022 increased by more than \$20,000! Older Rhode Islanders and taxpayers are sick and tired of being the piggy bank for the profits of big drug companies.

House Bill 7214 would provide the state of Rhode Island with a much-needed tool for keeping the cost of prescription drugs in check during a market shortage or emergency. House Bill 7214 would make violators guilty of a felony with punishment up to five (5) years in prison, a fine up to ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), or both. It's time to stop drug companies from price gouging Americans, employers, and taxpayers with prices that are 3 times more than what people in other countries pay for the same medications.

The intent of price gouging bills, such as H 7214, is to protect consumers from sudden and unreasonable spikes in prescription drug prices, ensure prices do not make essential medications 'out of reach', which is especially important during times of disaster or crisis, when the market could see a spike in cost, and to reduce out-of-pocket prescription drug costs.

AARP supports efforts to prohibit drug manufacturer price gouging and believes that federal, state and local governments should ensure that prescription drug launch prices and subsequent pricing decisions are reasonable, justified, and support improved consumer access and affordability.

We ask you to recommend passage on this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Matthew Netto
Associate State Director-AARP Rhode Island