

MARYLAND STATE SENATE PRESENTATION ON SB0388

Lawrence C. Diggs Jr., Member, Caucus of African American Leaders of Maryland.
February 7th & 8th, 2024

Good afternoon Madam Chairperson and the Committee. I appear before you today as a member of the Caucus of African American Leaders of Maryland, in support of Senate Bill 388, which is intended to expand the authority of the Prescription Drug Affordability Board to make high-cost prescription drugs affordable for ALL Marylanders.

As a senior citizen, and a survivor of COVID-19, which I contracted on March 23, 2020 while in New York, I am thankful and grateful to be alive and before you today. I was not expected to get through this plague.

Over the past four years, I have been treated for multiple ailments, some of which I am currently under treatment; significant among those is permanent damage to one of my lungs. I was prescribed ADVAIR 250/50 Discus by my doctor, which I have been using twice daily over four years. The cost for one monthly prescription is \$475.00, or \$5,700.00 annually without a drug plan. The annualized cost, with Medicare and a supplemental Medicare program, has been \$2100.00. With a tertiary prescription benefit program the cost was diminished somewhat. Unfortunately, the tertiary prescription drug company that covered part of my prescription cost, has dropped my coverage. I am back to paying \$2100.00 annually, and the manufacturer, Glaxo-Smith-Klein, is projecting a price increase in the near future.

There will come a time when I may not be able to afford the ADVAIR 250/50 Discus if there is a price increase, which will result in a financial hardship for me. Current prescription drug prices generally, are causing hardships on all citizens across the board.

There are thousands of Maryland senior citizens who are suffering with absurdly high prescription drug costs, for which some will have to make a choice whether to compromise their food budget or pay the high cost of prescription drugs; I might be one of them soon. Existing and future drug price increases by billion dollar drug companies like Glaxo-Smith-Klein, will ultimately cause the demise of those of us who rely on daily prescription drugs for our mere existence.

Therefore, I/we strongly and wholeheartedly support HB 388 known as the Prescription Drug Affordability Board Bill. We strongly urge its passage.

Thank you for this opportunity to respond and provide testimony.

Lawrence C. Diggs Jr., Member
Caucus of African American Leaders of Maryland

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