



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

MEMORANDUM

TO: Reporters and Editors
FR: Jill Kozeny, 202/224-1308
for Chairman Grassley
RE: Imported Prescription Drugs
DA: Thursday, Oct. 5, 2006

Sen. Chuck Grassley, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance, issued the comment below regarding the decision of United States Customs and Border Protection to abandon its recent interdiction policy with respect to non-narcotic prescription drug importations. The policy change was announced earlier this week by Customs, which had begun a crackdown on mail-order drugs from other countries last November. Beginning October 9, Customs will no longer process non-narcotic prescription drugs under the guidelines issued in November 2005. Instead, such shipments will be referred to the Food and Drug Administration for admissibility determinations.

Sen. Grassley's comment:

“Stopping this crackdown is a common-sense move by the federal government. But we still have more to do to make it legal for individuals to import their prescription drugs. I’ve always considered this a free-trade issue. Imports create competition and keep domestic industry more responsive to consumers. In the United States, we import everything consumers want. So why not pharmaceuticals? Consumers in the United States pay 60 to 112 percent more for brand-name prescription drugs than consumers in other countries. As we move forward to loosen up the restrictions on importing drugs, we also have to keep safety at the forefront. That is why Congress should enact comprehensive legislation legalizing drug imports and establishing a framework that protects the U.S. drug supply and assures consumers that the drugs they obtain meet safety standards.”

Sen. Grassley is a lead sponsor of bipartisan legislation (S.334) to make it legal for Americans to buy safe prescription drugs from other countries. He had previously sponsored his own comprehensive proposal in the 108th Congress (S.2307), and he has voted for every prescription drug reimportation amendment that has come before the U.S. Senate. The first one was offered in 2000 by Sen. Jim Jeffords of Vermont. In 2003, Sen. Grassley sponsored the Medicare legislation that created the first-ever Medicare prescription drug benefit, with an extensive program to help low-income Americans access prescription medicines with little or no cost.