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**Wyden Statement at Finance Committee Hearing on the President's Drug Blueprint**  
*As Prepared for Delivery*

There's a lot to cover this morning. I'll get to rescuing Americans who are getting mugged by their prescription drug bills, as well as the administration gutting safeguards for those with pre-existing conditions. But first, the American people are owed an answer about what's going to be done to protect the thousands of children the Trump administration separated from their mothers and fathers and put in the custody of the witness.

As of this morning, HHS, Homeland Security and the Justice Department seem to be doing a lot more to add to the bedlam and deflect blame than they're doing to tell parents where their kids are. According to new reports, the government is ransoming these children by telling their parents they can have their kids back if they agree to leave the country. The president tweeted that the U.S. should forget about due process rights for immigrants, essentially an endorsement of judging people by the color of their skin.

The White House chief of staff floated their family-shredding policy in the press more than a year ago. It wasn't conjured out of thin air this spring. But with news reports that HHS is scrambling to collect resumes of individuals with experience in child care, it's clear the department was woefully unprepared.

This committee has oversight of the child welfare system. Members have worked hard on bipartisan child welfare policies that keep families together whenever it's possible and safe. That's because unnecessarily ripping children away from their families and putting them in institutions is harmful. It's harmful to their health. It's scarring to their emotional well-being. It's detrimental to their growth. That is a fact, and your department knows it. You should know it.

Secretary Azar, I'd be ready for a lot of questions about this today. An administration that has traumatized thousands of child refugees, dehumanized these kids and their parents, and tried to normalize this behavior through deception has a lot to answer for.

Now let's shift to discuss Americans getting hit with enormous bills when they walk up the pharmacy window. When the president said in early 2017 that drug companies were "getting away with murder," he offered his diagnosis of the prescription drug cost problem. A year and a half later, it sure looks like he's decided not to treat the problem.

The president made prescription drug costs a key part of his pitch to the American people on health care. But the party in power hasn't done any legislating on it. The White House put out a 44-page, so-called "blueprint" -- essentially a collection of the same questions people have been asking about this issue for a decade or more. To me, it looks less like a blueprint than it looks like blue smoke and mirrors.

A lot of what the president and his team have said is head-scratching stuff. For example, the president labeled European countries “freeloaders.” He said that if drugs got more expensive overseas, fattening big pharma’s wallets, prices would fall here at home. You’ve got to be living in fantasy land to buy that theory.

First of all, I don’t know what magic wand the administration is planning on using to hike drug prices in other countries, but that’s not a power the U.S. has today.

Second, even if drug companies did come into a windfall from overseas, it’s naive and laughable to expect that they’d take that as a reason to slash prices in America. Look at the Trump tax law. Huge amounts of cash were showered onto these multinational drug companies. They funneled it into stock buybacks that benefit shareholders, not consumers.

Another trip to fantasyland: On May 30th, the president said that in two weeks, drug companies would be announcing, quote, “voluntary massive drops in prices.” Two weeks went by, then three weeks, and now it’s been nearly a month. No massive drops in prices to report.

As long as Americans are getting mugged at the pharmacy counter, this situation demands serious, bipartisan action. That’s why today I am releasing a comprehensive report that looks at exactly what makes this industry so complicated, and why it seems like prices only ever go up.

It’s not just a look at the drug manufacturers. There are a lot of pieces to the puzzle of holding drug prices down, including the middlemen, the distributors, the misplaced incentives and broken, out-of-date policies on the law books. This report is all about getting a comprehensive look under the hood of the entire drug industry in America for the first time. That information is key to having a full debate.

Otherwise, what Americans are getting from the Trump administration, and the president in particular, is mostly a lot of empty talk. The fact is, many of the questions raised in the administration’s 44 page document are important. They reflect an interest in some of the challenges I’ve worked on with respect to drug costs. But it’s discouraging to see the Trump administration pretend that repeating the same questions is equivalent to getting results.

There’s a big gap between the triumphant headlines the Trump administration tries to grab on prescription drugs and the lack of serious proposals they’ve put forward. I want to see that gap close, starting today.

I’ll wrap up on this last issue. The Trump administration announced recently that it was going to get out of the business of defending protections for Americans with pre-existing conditions -- protections which are the law of the land.

This isn’t some narrow regulation that only applies to a handful of people. There are more than 150 million Americans who get insurance through their employers, and I’d wager most of them would be surprised to learn this Trump decision hurts them, too. If you don’t have a pre-existing condition, I guarantee you know somebody who does. And the Trump administration decided it isn’t going to protect them.

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