

# OPINION

## Guest Editorial

### Bond's Broadcast

Supporters of Drug Importation Are TRIPPING  
By Lawrence A. Hunter, Ph.D.

Congress is now expected to consider whether U.S. consumers should be able to purchase drugs from abroad. The legislation to allow drug re-importation is expected to include a provision that represents one of the most dramatic government interventions into free markets since the New Deal.

Called "forced sales," the provision would compel American companies to sell drugs to foreign countries to be able to export them back into the United States, and they will be required to sell them at a price and in quantities dictated by the United States government.

Proponents of drug re-importation comprise an odd mix of ideological bedfellows. On the left, advocates of national health care believe it's unfair for Americans to pay higher prices for brand-name prescription drugs than Europeans and Canadians do in their socialized and price-controlled systems. On the right, avid free traders argue that the ban is an unjustified barrier to free trade, which keeps prices high.

Pharmaceutical companies argue that although the ban is imperfect, it is essential to lessen the damage caused by the World Trade Organization's Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). This international agreement permits countries to revoke patents in "circumstances of extreme urgency" or for "public non-commercial use."

What this so-called "public-interest" loophole means in countries with price controls is that firms are forced to make some concession bargaining power when it comes to "negotiating" prices with U.S. pharmaceutical manufacturers. TRIPS empowers these countries to make U.S. companies lose money.

In our pharmaceutical business, there is no right to sell a product or to sell it only on acceptable terms. In fact, the U.S. government invokes this principle. Through forced sales, the U.S. government does this to countries that would sell its goods, and it does this to those countries that it will sell, on whatever terms it chooses.

Proponents argue that it's the only way to bring lower prices into the United States. But that's not true. There are many ways to significantly lower prices; they simply will create a market for foreign resellers that can buy U.S. drugs at extraordinarily low prices, export them back into the American market, and then sell them for considerably more.

There's not free trade for free. It's government-managed trade through a particularly onerous government regulation. Whatever one's opinion on the current re-importation ban, no real free trader could possibly support a ban that would restrict a foreign sale mandate.

If, as free traders contend, the point of lifting the importation ban is to remove an artificial government barrier to trade that keeps prices "artificially high," then coupling that repeal with a new "forced sale" provision that would require a foreign exportation would lower prices without and some new onerous government intervention. Then it is clear the motivation for lifting the ban goes far beyond removal of free trade; it includes importing foreign price controls into the United States via the back door.

Since when do free traders support Congress's setting prices? If foreign buyers are to have the right to re-import prescription drugs back into the United States, then certainly domestic sellers should be free to determine the terms upon which they will export those drugs to begin with. It would be ironic - but no less tragic - if price controls were smuggled into the United States through a forced-sale mandate cloaked in the rhetoric of free trade.

Dr. Lawrence A. Hunter is senior director at the Institute for Policy Innovation and the former staff fellow of the congressional Economic Committee.

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## OPINION

### Bond's Broadcast

Last week was pretty rough at the Bond house. As little Sadie Jo reached her third month birthday celebration, we had a broadcast that was a little out of order.

Both Beth and I had taken her to the doctor here several times for what had appeared to be intestinal problems. Although we tried nearly every remedy, it was becoming obvious to us that there could be something wrong. The doctor here didn't hesitate to call Children's Hospital in Cincinnati and schedule an appointment for Sadie Jo.

So, on Friday morning, Beth and I took her into his quick trip to Cincinnati in quest of some medical opinion.

After just a little while with the Ohio doctor, it was determined Sadie Jo is apparently fine, and while we still have to watch her, it seems like things are going to be okay.

The pain continued. It really began to worry me. I'm much when the chicks aren't doing well, especially since I'm a control freak anyway. I could see and appreciate that without some medical attention things were simply not going to get any better.

Not that the trip to the hospital for Sadie wasn't enough, late Friday night, Beth started having intense pain in her stomach area. The longer she went the more intense the pain got.

She had not felt well the night before. We had left a bowl of on the table when we fed them last night and got it on the tray of his walker.

It took me a few seconds to get to my hand on the stool with his hand on the stool. I was sure it was hard for me to reach up and get it and thankfully he didn't drop it and break it. Ben and I are learning very quickly that things are quickly having to be done higher and higher.

Our two little ones are very quickly becoming more independent. My son is now able to get into the tub on his own. He is now able to get into the tub on his own. He is now able to get into the tub on his own.

On Tuesday night, I have an enormous amount of respect for single moms! I guess I have somewhat taken for granted that my husband comes home every night and helps me with the babies in the evening and throughout the night. For those moms who are with their babies all the time and don't get a break for some alone time, I admire you! I don't know how you do it.

This week, Ben has been a little sick. I don't know if it's the cold or the flu, but because the babies aren't wanting to sleep at night, I'm sure it was hard for school, but Ben has a cold. He has a sore throat and he's been coughing a lot.

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It is wonderful that we have a hospital right here in Carlisle and Nicholas County. Support for this hospital is most commendable.

The people in this hospital and healthcare facility deal with the most stress in their lives. People who are fed up with the status quo and are looking for a good time don't show up at the emergency room and could hear how he did things.

People who show up at this hospital are not demanding, hurting and scared. I just think if you had to travel 45 minutes to a hospital...

I am sorry that Jordan Myser was injured on the last play of the game. It appeared to be nothing less than intentional.

After listening to Michael, Dr. Lorenzo ordered some pain relief for Beth and once it was under control, she was taken for a CAT scan as well as some x-rays to rule out other problems.

It appears after the testing that Beth had a gall bladder attack. There are reports of a small gall stone.

I have no idea exactly where these cuts are, but after watching Beth I want to make it clear that I choose to not have this happen to my child.

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Anyways, I had to take a whole Turkey eight weeks before Cindy's Saturday afternoon, Cindy and I did some of the preparation work. I made a turkey sandwich and Cindy baked a pumpkin pie.

On Tuesday morning, I got up at 5:30 a.m. and went to the oven while Cindy put the side dishes together and set out a huge religious display.

As the meal preparations continued and our home filled with the amazing aroma of roasting turkey, a wonderful transformation took place. Sunday in November, it became the fourth Thursday in November.

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## OPINION

### Fourth District Report

Supporting Kentucky's Sportsmen Recently, the House Commission on Education and Labor passed the bill of the first Sportsmen's Caucus. As a member of the Congressional Sportsmen Caucus, I was proud to join my colleagues in recognizing the contributions of sportsmen to the Commonwealth of Kentucky and across the country.

In the U.S., there are more than 24 million Americans who are sportsmen. Their passion for the sport and the great outdoors is an exceptional economic force. Each year, hunters and fishers spend more than \$76 billion dollars on their sport including more than \$9 billion on the purchasing and leasing of land. In fact, their impact does not stop there; sportsmen also support small businesses, job creation and tourism in their communities to the tune of \$192 billion in annual revenue and 1.6 million jobs.

Hunters spend \$2 billion annually on food and beverages consumed during hunting trips. And, they spend more than \$614 million on lodging during their travels, \$132 million more than the combined annual revenues of Comfort Inn, Com-

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## OPINION

### Steve's Report

The holiday season started early this year - or at least it did in the Scalf home. My son, Jordan, is leaving for an 18-month mission for the church in Thailand.

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## OPINION

### Johnson Mathers Health Care, Inc.

Since 1962, Johnson Mathers Health Care, Inc. has been providing quality health care services to the community. We are proud to be a part of the Johnson Mathers family.

Johnson Mathers Health Care, Inc. is a leading provider of health care services in the region. We offer a wide range of services, including primary care, specialty care, and hospital services.

Our commitment to quality care and patient satisfaction is the foundation of our success. We are dedicated to providing the highest quality of care to our patients.