

Pharma Flooded Sinema With Campaign Contributions During The Third Quarter, Then She Opposed The Reconciliation Bill's Prescription Drug Pricing Provisions In A Major Reversal On Previous Support For Lowering Drug Costs

SUMMARY: Senator Kyrsten Sinema has recently [come out](#) against provisions in the budget reconciliation bill that would allow the federal government to negotiate prescription drug prices for Medicare recipients. As it turns out, during the third quarter of 2021, Sinema raked in over \$25,000 in contributions from the pharmaceutical industry, which [opposes](#) the Build Back Better Act. Her stance, however, is entirely hypocritical; throughout Sinema's time in Congress, she has supported lowering the costs of prescription drugs:

- April 2019: As senator, [Sinema co-wrote a letter](#) to Sec. Azar in which she praised the administration for their attempts to lower the costs of prescription drugs.
- September 2018, Sinema was [given](#) an award for her efforts to make prescription drugs more affordable for seniors.
- May 2018: While running for senate, Sinema [specifically](#) highlighted the importance of lowering the cost of prescription drugs in a campaign ad.
- March 2014: As a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, then-Rep. Sinema signed a [coalition letter](#) in opposition to a rule, proposed by the Obama administration, that would have [cut benefits](#) for Medicare Part D recipients.

Lowering the cost of prescription drugs is an [imperative](#) for equitable healthcare outcomes (including for the [elderly](#), who Sinema has championed) and has [broad support](#) among Americans.

Quarter Three 2021: Senator Sinema Raked In Over \$25,000 In Pharmaceutical Industry Contributions

During The Third Quarter Of 2021, The Pharmaceutical Industry Contributed \$25,300 To Senator Sinema's Campaign Committee

DATE	DONOR	RECIPIENT	AMOUNT
08/31/21	Sunovion Pharmaceuticals Inc. Good Gove	Sinema For Arizona	\$2,900
08/31/2021	Astellas US LLC PAC (Astellas PAC)	Sinema For Arizona	\$3,000
09/30/2021	Takeda Pharmaceuticals America Inc. PAC	Sinema For Arizona	\$2,500
09/30/2021	Takeda Pharmaceuticals America Inc. PAC	Sinema For Arizona	\$2,500
09/30/21	Alexion Pharmaceuticals Inc. PAC	Sinema For Arizona	\$1,000

09/30/21	Alexion Pharmaceuticals Inc. PAC	Sinema For Arizona	\$1,500
09/30/2021	AbbVie PAC	Sinema For Arizona	\$2,500
08/04/2021	Eli Lilly and Company PAC	Sinema For Arizona	\$2,500
08/04/2021	EMD Serono, Inc Political Action Commit	Sinema For Arizona	\$2,500
08/04/2021	Eisai Inc. PAC	Sinema For Arizona	\$2,900
08/04/2021	Lundbeck LLC	Sinema For Arizona	\$500
08/04/2021	Lundbeck LLC	Sinema For Arizona	\$1,000
TOTAL:			\$25,300

Sunovion, Astellas, Takeda, AbbVie, Eli Lilly, EMD Serono, Eisai, Lundbeck Are [Members](#) Of PhRMA. [PhRMA, accessed [10/15/21](#)]

September 2021: Senator Sinema Opposes Reforms In The Reconciliation Bill That Would Allow The Federal Government To Negotiate The Price Of Prescription Drugs For Medicare Recipients As The Pharmaceutical Industry Came Out Against The Bill

September 2021: Senator Sinema Opposes Reforms Outlined In The Reconciliation Bill That Allow The Federal Government To Negotiate The Costs Of Prescription Drugs For Medicare Recipients

September 2021: Sinema Opposes Plans That Allow The Government To Negotiate The Costs Of Prescription Drugs For Medicare Recipients In The Reconciliation Bill. “Arizona Senator Kyrsten Sinema, who is a top recipient of donations from the pharmaceutical industry, is reportedly objecting to prescription drug pricing reforms that are being pushed by President Biden and Congressional Democrats. The White House and Congressional Democrats are currently trying to shepherd two large bills through Congress: the \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure deal that the Senate approved last month and a larger \$3.5 trillion spending plan that would fund services like free universal childcare by boosting taxes on high-income earners and corporations. Democrats are trying to pass the larger spending plan through a process called budget reconciliation, which allows them to pass it with a party-line vote. Both plans include provisions that would allow the federal government to negotiate the price of pharmaceuticals for Medicare recipients, a policy intended to reduce the cost of description drugs.” [Phoenix New Times, [9/21/21](#)]

Congress Is Currently Considering Both T\$1.5 Trillion he Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill And A \$3.5 Trillion Reconciliation Package The Latter Of Which Allow The Federal Government To Negotiate The Price of Prescription Drugs For Medicare Recipients. “The White House and Congressional Democrats are currently trying to shepherd two large bills through Congress: the \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure deal that the Senate approved last month and a larger \$3.5 trillion spending plan that would fund services like free universal childcare by boosting taxes on high-income earners and corporations. Democrats are trying to pass the larger spending plan through a process called budget reconciliation, which allows them to pass it with a party-line vote. Both plans include provisions that would allow the federal government to negotiate the price of pharmaceuticals for Medicare recipients, a policy intended to reduce the cost of description drugs. However, it appears that Senator Sinema, who championed the bipartisan infrastructure deal just last month, is opposed to

the drug pricing reform proposals. With their current razor-thin majorities in both the House and Senate, Democrats need every vote to pass the spending plans.” [Phoenix New Times, [9/21/21](#)]

- **The Second Bill That Would Allow The Government Medicare To Negotiate Prices For The Government And Tie Acceptable Drug Prices To Those Paid In Other Counties.** “Among the issues to be resolved was one that flared in the House on Tuesday when two moderate Democrats, Representatives Scott Peters of California and Kurt Schrader of Oregon, came out against the Democratic leadership’s drug pricing plan and proposed a less aggressive alternative that would most likely produce considerably less savings for the government. Another Democrat and a co-sponsor of that alternative, Representative Kathleen Rice of New York, also said she would vote against the leaders’ plan, which would allow Medicare to negotiate prices for the government and tie acceptable drug prices to those paid in other countries.” [New York Times, [9/14/21](#)]

The Pharmaceutical Industry's Trade Group, PhRMA, Represents Eight Of Sinema's Q3 2021 Donors And Opposes The Reconciliation Package And Ran Ads Against The Build Back Better Act.

The Pharmaceutical Industry's "Top Trade Group" PhRMA Has Run Ads Against The Reconciliation Package, Claiming It Would Have Worsened The Pandemic. "And the pharmaceutical industry has embarked on its own wide-ranging campaign to combat Democrats' drug pricing proposals, another potential revenue source in the bill. Conservative outfits previously backed by the sector's top trade group, known as PhRMA, have run recent ads claiming lawmakers' plans would have worsened the coronavirus pandemic." [The Washington Post, [08/31/21](#)]

Sunovion, Astellas, Takeda, AbbVie, Eli Lilly, EMD Serono, Eisai, Lundbeck Are [Members](#) Of PhRMA. [PhRMA, accessed [10/15/21](#)]

HEADLINE: “Corporate America Launches Massive Lobbying Blitz To Kill Key Parts Of Democrats’ \$3.5 Trillion Economic Plan.” [The Washington Post, [08/31/21](#)]

- **A PhRMA Spokesperson Said The Group Opposed Democrats' Drug Pricing Reforms, Suggesting They Were "Empty Promises That Will Do More Harm Than Good."** "Brian Newell, a spokesman for PhRMA, stressed that the group supports general pricing reforms — just not the ideas Democrats are pursuing. 'The industry is willing to come to the table and do its fair share to help deliver real relief to patients at the pharmacy, not empty promises that will do more harm than good,' he said in a statement." [The Washington Post, [08/31/21](#)]

April 2019: Sen. Sinema Co-Wrote A Letter To HHS Secretary Azar Applauding The Trump Administration’s “Commitment To Lowering Drug Prices”

April 2019: Sen. Sinema Co-Wrote A Letter To HHS Secretary Azar Applauding The Trump Administration’s “Commitment To Lowering Drug Prices” But Chastised The Administration For Potentially Harming The Protected Classes Of Medications

April: 2019: Sen. Sinema Co-wrote A Letter With Sen. Rubio To HHS Secretary Azar In Which They Applauded The Trump Administration’s “Commitment To Lowering Drug Prices” While Chastising The Department For “Undermining The Protected Class Status Of Medications That Could Have Longer Consequences In The Long Term.” Patient and physician groups and drug companies are besieging Congress once again. In response, Senators Marco Rubio (R–FL) and Kyrsten Sinema (D–AZ) have circulated a letter to HHS Secretary Alex Azar decrying the changes. They wrote that although they applauded the

administration's commitment to lowering drug prices, 'undermining the protected class status of medications could have much larger consequences in the long term.' Representatives Barbara Lee (D-CA) and Will Hurd (R-TX) are readying a similar letter from House members." [US National Library of Medicine National Institutes Of Health, [4/4/19](#)]

- **President Trump Planned To Lower The Costs Of Prescription Drugs.** "President Trump vowed on Friday to 'bring soaring drug prices back down to earth' by promoting competition among pharmaceutical companies, and he suggested that the government could require drugmakers to disclose prices in their ubiquitous television advertising. But he dropped the popular and populist proposals of his presidential campaign, opting not to have the federal government directly negotiate lower drug prices for Medicare. And he chose not to allow American consumers to import low-cost medicines from abroad." [New York Times, [5/11/18](#)]

September 2018: Sinema Was Given An Award For Her Efforts To Make Drug Prices More Affordable For Seniors

September 2018: Sinema Was Presented With "The Champion For Healthy Seniors Award" For Her Efforts To Make Prescription Drugs More Affordable To Seniors

September 2018: Sinema, Was Presented By The Partnership To Fight Chronic Disease With "The Champion For Healthy Seniors Award," In Part For Her Efforts To "Make Prescription Drugs More Affordable For Seniors." At the town hall, Sinema was presented with the Champion for Healthy Seniors award from the Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease for her successful efforts to improve Medicare and make prescription drugs more affordable for seniors. [The Office of Congresswoman Krysten Sinema, accessed via Wayback Machine [9/20/18](#)]

May 2018: While Running For Senate, Sinema Specifically Put Out A Campaign Ad Talking Advocating That Americans Have "Access To The Lowest Cost Prescriptions."

May 2018: Sinema In Senate Campaign Ad: "We Need To Make Health Care More Affordable With Access To The Lowest Cost Prescriptions"

May 2018: Sinema In Senate Campaign Ad: "We Need To Make Health Care More Affordable With Access To The Lowest Cost Prescriptions." "Growing up our family struggled to make ends meet and we didn't have health insurance. No child should go without a doctor, and no family should be bankrupted by medical bills. We need to make health care more affordable with access to the lowest-cost prescriptions and fix what's broken in the system. Not go back to when Arizonans had. No say about their health coverage. I'm Kyrsten Sinema. I sponsored this message because every American deserves quality, affordable, health care." [YouTube, Sinema For Arizona, [5/9/18](#)]

March 2014: Sinema Opposed A Proposed Rule Change By The Center For Medicare & Medicaid Services That Would Cut Benefits To Medicare Part D Recipients

March 2014: Then-Rep. Sinema Was Part Of A Coalition Letter To The Center For Medicare & Medicaid Services Opposing Proposed Rule CMS-4159--P

March 2014: Then-Rep. Sinema Was Part Of A Coalition Letter To The Center For Medicare & Medicaid Services Opposing Proposed Rule CMS-4159—P. “Rep. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz. (9th CD), issued the text of the following letter: Dear Administrator Tavenner: We are writing to urge you to withdraw the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) Part D proposed rule (CMS-4159-P). We are deeply concerned that this rule threatens to cause disruption for millions of Part D enrollees this fall during 2015 Open Enrollment and inflict significant harm to the successful Part D model that has resulted in high enrollee satisfaction and lower-than-expected costs. [...] We are very concerned that the proposed rule will jeopardize the effectiveness and benefits of Medicare Part D, including beneficiary access to lower-premium drug plans. Lower-premium drug plans - some as low as \$12.60 a month - account for around 70% of total stand-alone Part D enrollment. Enrollees in lower-premium plans are overwhelmingly satisfied, citing lower costs, convenient access to pharmacies, and other benefits. Research even shows that many of the lower-premium plans have the same or better average quality ratings than plans with higher premiums. We fear this proposed rule could restrict plan choice and access to needed drugs for seniors who choose lower-premium plans. In light of the success of Medicare Part D and our strong concerns with the sweeping changes being considered by CMS, we ask that you withdraw the proposed rule.” [The Office of Congressman Ami Bera, [3/10/14](#)]

- **Medicare Part D Is Prescription Drug Coverage For Those Who Are Medicare Recipients.** “Medicare Part D is the prescription drug coverage available to people with Medicare who have Medicare Part A and/or Part B and live in a Part D plan’s service area. The Part D benefit is available through private plans that are approved by Medicare. Each Part D plan can vary in cost and the drugs covered, and plans can change from year to year. A plan that covers certain prescriptions this year might change and not cover them next year.” [National Council on Aging, accessed [9/27/21](#)]

The Proposed Rule Would Have Limited The Availability Of Prescription Drug Coverage For Seniors On Medicare

The “Proposed Rule For Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Coverage” Would Have “Limited The Availability Of Prescription Drug Coverage For Seniors Who Rely On Medicare.” “The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services withdrew a proposed rule for Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage on Tuesday. The rule would have abruptly changed and limited the availability of prescription drug coverage for seniors who rely on Medicare. The decision by CMS comes after Dr. Ruiz and over 40 Members of Congress sent a letter urging the organization to rescind the rule.” [KESQ, [3/11/14](#)]

Lowering Prescription Costs, Which Is A Broadly Supported Policy, Would Have Positive And Equitable Outcomes

Lowering The Cost Of Prescription Drugs Would Help Lower-Income Americans, People Of Color, And Seniors

Lower Income Americans And Communities Of Color Are Disproportionately Affected By High Drug Costs. “Low-income individuals and communities of color, already besieged by poor access to health care, limited insurance coverage, and other health inequities exposed by COVID-19, also suffer another health disparity – they are among the hardest hit by continually rising prescription drug prices.[...] Because high drug prices disproportionately affect low-income, uninsured, and people of color, state laws that work to lower drug costs for these communities are important. Recent examples include a Minnesota law that extends insulin affordability measures to uninsured individuals, and states laws that target a discriminatory practice within insurance benefit design known as adverse tiering. Adverse tiering occurs when insurers place drugs – including those used to treat HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B and C that predominantly affect communities of color – in a drug formulary’s highest cost-sharing tier, forcing patients to pay more even when the drug is a generic.” [National Academy For State Health Policy, [10/26/20](#)]

Seniors Currently Pay On Average \$6,600 A Month For One Brand Name Medication And “The Average Senior Takes Four Or Five Prescriptions Each Month.” “The average senior takes four or five prescriptions

each month, usually on a chronic basis. With an average annual price tag of \$6,600 for just one brand-name drug, that quickly adds up to more than the median annual income for people on Medicare.” [Arizona Republic, op-ed, [8/31/21](#)]

And According To A 2019 Kaiser Family Foundation Poll, Americans Overwhelmingly Support Government Action In Prescription Drug Price Control

March 2019: A Poll Released The Kaiser Family Foundation Indicated That Americans Support Government Price Control of Prescription Drug Costs. “About a quarter of Americans surveyed say they've had trouble paying for their prescription drugs, and a majority welcome government action to help cut the cost of medications. A survey released Friday by the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation finds that many people have skipped or rationed their prescription medications or have substituted cheaper over-the-counter drugs. The result? Those who ration their meds are often sicker, the poll finds. The responses also illustrate why prescription drug prices are such a big issue for the Trump administration and on Capitol Hill.” [NPR, [3/1/19](#)]