



[Home](#) > [Press Library](#) << [BACK](#)



Campaign Finance Reform

Common Cause President Pingree Hails Supreme Court Decision on Maine Rx Law A Victory For Those Struggling With High Cost of Prescription Drugs

Pingree authored legislation while Maine Senate Majority Leader: Victory For Those Struggling With High Cost of Prescription Drugs

May 19, 2003

Contact:
Mary Boyle
202.736.5770

Chellie Pingree, president of Common Cause and author of legislation that created a unique program in Maine to reduce prescription drug costs, called Monday's U.S. Supreme Court decision to allow the program to begin "a victory for all people who've been struggling with the high cost of prescription drugs."

"I'm very proud the state of Maine has stood up to one of the most powerful lobbies in Washington, and hope that other states will use ours as a model to help citizens afford the medicine they need," said Pingree, who was the Maine Senate majority leader in 2000 when she wrote the bill that created the Maine Rx program.

Maine Rx, which was challenged by the pharmaceutical companies, would use the state's negotiating and buying power under the federal Medicaid law to cut drug prices by at least 25 percent for the working poor, retirees and others who don't receive health coverage or drug benefits through their employers.

The drug industry won a court order blocking the program in October 2000. The 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals later upheld the Maine Rx program, though it kept the plan on hold during the pharmaceutical companies' appeal to the Supreme Court.

Since leaving the Maine Senate, Pingree in March became the president of Common Cause, which fights the undue influence of big money in politics. The pharmaceutical industry is one of the most powerful lobbies in Washington. Last election cycle alone, major drug companies gave nearly \$30 million in political contributions to federal candidates and national political parties, and spent more than \$94.8 million lobbying Congress, government agencies, and the White House, according to Common Cause.

"This Supreme Court decision shows that the people, through their elected representatives, can defeat even the strongest special interest," Pingree said. "Now, hopefully sometime soon, citizens of Maine won't have to get on a bus to go to Canada in search of cheaper prescription drugs."

Copyright 2003, Common Cause
1250 Connecticut Ave., NW #600
Washington D.C. 20036

202/833-1200

