

SB 2170 – Testimony by Dustin Gawrylow (Lobbyist #266) North Dakota Watchdog Network

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us how much Americans and North Dakotans rely on our robust healthcare system. The many different stakeholders, from the manufacturers to the patients themselves, work in the free market to determine prices and pushes for innovation on all fronts. This system has been imperative in our fight against COVID-19, especially in developing multiple vaccines in record time.

So, with all these good things, why would the North Dakotan state government want to replace our system with restrictive socialist policies?

Unfortunately, our legislature is considering a bill, SB 2170, that would limit the free market and pin medicine prices to those in Canada, a foreign, socialist market. The goal of this legislation is to reduce drug prices. Instead, it will raise prices of medicines and limit our state's access to medical innovations. This bill, and a few others like it have already passed the State Senate. So this debate is not just about an idol threat from bills that have no chance of passing.

America's free market encourages competition to create the most effective medications at the cheapest price. Setting the price of our medicines will take away any drive for innovation. And unfortunately, it could result in North Dakotans going without potentially life-saving options. Our innovators worked to create three vaccines in less than a year since this pandemic reached a critical mass. With socialist price fixing, we would have zero.

SB 2170 has the good intentions of lowering healthcare prices, but it will have the complete opposite effect. The American way is all about using the free market to find solutions. We should continue with, rather than give up on, the free market.