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For 15 years, labor unions in North America's Building Trades and companies in the biopharmaceutical industry have enjoyed a robust partnership, formalized as the Pharmaceutical Industry Labor-Management Association (PILMA).

The biopharmaceutical industry is a vital sector in the United States, supporting over 4.7 million jobs and remains an important economic driver for the health of our nation. The building trades enjoy a strong relationship with the industry, which requires highly skilled workers to build research and manufacturing facilities to exacting standards. Not only do these companies employ our members to build new facilities, but also to continually retrofit and upgrade existing infrastructure, providing a steady stream of work in their drive to find new discoveries of life-saving medicines.

The Senate Finance Committee is preparing to mark-up the Prescription Drug Pricing Reduction Act of 2019, a deal that would include draconian measures in Medicare that would have marginal benefit to patients and have dire implications for the future of biopharmaceutical innovation and industry jobs. PILMA has a long-standing policy opposing price controls. These so-called solutions hurt the industry's ability to pursue lifesaving cures and impair its ability to invest in capital expansion projects that put our members to work.

There are better solutions to address the cost of prescription drugs. Recently, PILMA has supported proposals to require Pharmacy Benefit Managers and insurance companies to pass negotiated savings directly to patients and union plan sponsors.

America's skilled craft unions and PILMA have a long history of supporting policies that reduce barriers to access for patients, which includes lowering out-of-pocket costs. However, this proposal has an outsized economic impact compared to the marginal patient benefit. The cost to manufacturers threatens the industry's footprint in the U.S. as well as the jobs that come with it. The men and women of the building trades depend on large infrastructure projects like those the biopharmaceutical industry provides to continue apprenticeship training programs, fund health and welfare plans and keep members earning a steady wage to remain in the middle class.

As the Senate Finance Committee explores proposals to address access and affordability of medicines in Medicare, we urge Congress to not adopt policies that will undermine seniors' access to medicines, future medical innovation, and consequentially jobs for construction labor unions vital to medical discovery and the economy. We strongly encourage the Senate Finance Committee to not move forward with the planned mark-up, and for Congress to reject these measures.

The biopharmaceutical industry makes significant contributions to new scientific advancements and is pursuing not just innovative treatments, but also cures. It is essential that the government protect this industry that is vital to the fabric of the U.S. economy.