

Politicians Who Shill for Big Pharma 'Not Fit to Represent the People'



By [Alex Lawson](#), [Alexandra Rojas](#) | [The Defender](#)

Last week, Rep. Kathleen Rice (D-N.Y.) was one of three Democrats who cast a pivotal no vote in the House Energy and Commerce Committee. Rice shamefully [voted against](#) giving Medicare the power to negotiate lower drug prices as part of the \$3.5 trillion Build Back Better package.

Despite the setback, we're going to win. We're going to give Medicare negotiating power to lower drug prices for everyone. And [Pharma](#) is scared.

Pharma is so scared that they've launched a massive campaign against giving Medicare negotiating power. Pharma's lobbying frenzy includes multi-million dollar TV [ad buys](#) and spending over [\\$6 million](#) from April to June of this year on lobbying (a 19% increase during the same time last year).

With a key fight underway in Congress, industry is trying to leverage its role in coronavirus vaccine development to sink a "once-in-a-generation" chance to slash drug costs. #TheDefender: SIGN UP TODAY—> <https://t.co/UTTfyj2wHi><https://t.co/RH26teldeP>

– Children's Health Defense (@ChildrensHD) [September 17, 2021](#)

Any politician who listens to Pharma and puts profits over people's lives deserves to wear that shame forever. That's why we have a mobile billboard in Rice's Long Island district to let her constituents know she betrayed them. Clearly, Rice needs a reminder that she works for the people of New York's fourth Congressional district, not Pharma.

It will come as no surprise that Rice (along with the other no voters Rep. Scott Peters (D-Calif.) and Rep. Kurt Schrader (D-Ore.)) is in the pockets of Pharma. Rice has received \$84,259 from campaign contributions from pharmaceutical and health corporations during her congressional career. And Peters and Schrader have collectively taken an appalling \$1.7 million from Pharma during their time in Congress.

Big Pharma has given Rep. Kathleen Rice \$84,259 during her career.

And Rep. Rice listened to her Pharma donors by voting NO on giving Medicare power to negotiate lower drug prices in the Build Back Better package—despite 90% of her constituents supporting the policy.

Shameful.

Source: OpenSecrets



Rice's betrayal may come as a surprise to her constituents because Rice campaigned for years on taking on Pharma's greed. And that's why Rice is the perfect example of everything wrong with status quo corporate politicians.

Rice claimed to support the lowering of prescription drugs. In an October 2020 campaign [ad](#), Rice promised to "always put the health and safety of Long Island first."

Not to mention, an overwhelming [90%](#) of Rice's constituents support giving Medicare the power to negotiate lower drug prices. It's hard to find a policy more popular with voters across the spectrum than taking on Pharma greed and lowering drug prices.

But when given the chance to make good on that promise, and represent the interests of 90% of her constituents, Rice still sided with Pharma and betrayed the people she works for.

But that's exactly why we're going to continue to fight for – and win – lower drug prices. We're going to win because the American people – and the vast majority of the Democratic caucus and [President Biden](#) – are on our side.

We have the people, and we also have some big guns on our side spending money, [AARP just dropped \\$4 million](#) on an ad buy pushing for Medicare negotiation.

That is why carrying water for Pharma is not only a moral failure, it is also a political failure. Any politician who puts Pharma profits before the needs of their constituents will lose their jobs. And they will deserve it.

Pharma shills simply aren't fit to represent the people of their districts.

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