June 11, 2018

The Honorable Jeff Sessions, Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvanıa Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Sessions,

It has come to my attention through recent news reports, a copy of which is provided for your convenience, that as far back as 2010, the Office of Intellectual Property Enforcement appears to have coordinated an effort with parts of the pharmaceutical industry to create false safety concerns about international pharmacies in order to limit access to cheaper drug alternatives. Based on the information provided through a Freedom of Information Act initiative, an official in the prior administration coordinated with the senior director of Eli Lilly and others to organize a public relations campaign against online pharmacies. The report states:

“The White House office made the (pharmaceutical) industry representatives part of an effort to get Internet companies...to implement a voluntary crackdown on online pharmacies that do not have licenses in the United States. The companies were sometimes dubbed “chokepoint” stakeholders in the email traffic since they could cut off electronic payments and shut down websites.” – McAuliff, M. (2018, May 2). Keeping International Pharmacies Under a Cloud. Tarbell. Retrieved from http://www.tarbell.org.

This information, and the tactics used by the prior Administration and the pharmaceutical industry are deeply disturbing to read. I believe that an open, and transparent investigation by the Department of Justice is warranted in this instance. Attempts by the Executive Branch, or members of a particular industry, to stifle their competition or to prevent citizens from having access to all available safe and affordable options is unconscionable.
Last month, President Trump unveiled his plan to help combat the rising price of prescription drugs. This effort is to be commended, as I have heard from many of my constituents about the increasing unaffordability of their medications. I believe that the Administration, in cooperation with the States, can achieve the President’s goal of reducing the escalating costs of prescription drugs.

Another important aspect of combating higher drug prices is to remove unnecessary obstacles to consumer choice. Recently, I was made aware of a raid by the Food and Drug Administration on a business in my district that works to import prescription drugs from Canada and serves many of the constituents in my district. I previously wrote to the FDA back in January of this year about this unsettling event, a copy of this letter is also enclosed for your convenience. I believe that there may be a correlation between the meeting in 2010, and this raid on a local business and asset to our community. I respectfully request that your Department investigate this matter as well.

Thank you for your service to our country and for the good work that your Department does in enforcing the laws of our land. I stand ready to help assist you in these efforts in any way that I can as we work together to improve the quality of life for all our citizens. Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you have any questions or wish for further information. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Danny Burgess
Florida House of Representatives
District 38

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