



# Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

*Shared Voices for Liberal Religious Values in Maryland*

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## Testimony in **Support** of HB 768/SB 759 **Health - Prescription Drug Affordability Board**

TO: Chairman Pendergrass and the members of the Health and Government Operations Committee.

FROM: Ashley Egan, Coordinator, Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

DATE: March 6, 2019

I am writing to you on behalf of the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland, of which I am the Coordinator. As Unitarian Universalists, we believe in the inherent worth and dignity of all people. We believe everyone should be treated with justice, equity and compassion, especially when it comes to our health. We believe the everyone should have access to the tools they need to make their lives and themselves better, and a huge part of that is access to affordable medication. We are supporting the Prescription Drug Affordability Board, in the hopes that it would provide the necessary oversight to the cost of medication.

I am also a mom of a child with epilepsy and our experience does shed light on some of the practices that the drug companies use to pad their pocketbooks.

In order to keep her seizure-free my daughter takes Trileptal or oxcarbazepine medication two times a day. Because of insurance, we pay around \$40 a year for her medication. However, that is not the true cost, according to our receipt, her three-month supply of medication should cost us \$1775.89 or roughly \$591.97 per month. If I was to buy her medication without insurance, it would be \$1,683.00 per month according to [www.Drugs.com](http://www.Drugs.com). If I was to buy her medication from Canada, it would be \$279.00 per month according to [www.CanadaDrugsOnline.com](http://www.CanadaDrugsOnline.com). This is quite a bit of discrepancy for the same medication.

Also, according to a report by the AARP, my daughter's medication price went up 16.9 percent between 2002-2006, making it the second steepest climb behind Ambien, which was 27.7%. Over the past 12 years, my daughter's medication costs skyrocketed and I was totally unaware, because they never cost me more than \$10-15 a month. If my husband were to lose his job, this cost would be financially devastating. We need a board of experts, to review these prices. And, we need transparency to ensure that members are not beholden to the drug companies.