

US lawmakers reject Canada drug purchases

20 October 2011

The US Senate Thursday rejected a measure that would have enabled Americans to buy prescription drugs in Canada in a bid to reduce the costs of their health care.

The measure, an amendment to a spending bill, was defeated by a vote of 45 to 55.

It would have barred the US [Food and Drug Administration](#) from spending money to stop people importing prescription drugs from Canada that comply with the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetics Act -- which very few Canadian drugs do.

Even Canadian drugs with identical chemical makeup to US drugs do not technically comply with the law, because the FDA does not inspect Canadian [manufacturing plants](#) or approve their labeling.

Republican Senator David Vitter, who introduced the measure, has tried and failed on several occasions to gain passage of similar measures, with the question of the importation of drugs from Canada a perennial hot-button issue.

US lobbying groups linked to the pharmaceutical industry had vehemently opposed to the measure.

In a statement Wednesday, the National Association of Drug Store Chains said it opposed the "personal importation" of drugs by Americans.

"NACDS shares your goal of reducing the cost of [prescription drugs](#)," it said in a letter to Vitter.

"However, we do not believe that [consumer safety](#) can be ensured under a prescription drug reimportation system."

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