http://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/affordablecareact-s5.jpg

This once promising legislation to advance medical innovation has been hijacked by big money interests and lobbyists to legalize fraud and hand out special deals to GOP donors. Help progressive Sen. Elizabeth Warren stop it.

WASHINGTON - For two years, Congress has been working on legislation to advance medical innovation in the United States. From the beginning, I've argued that any "cures" bill must include substantial new funding for medical research (National Institutes of Health), or it's not going to cure anything.

Finally we put together a pretty decent bill with some serious compromises and some good work: a bipartisan mental health bill, protection of genetic privacy for patients, a proposal to improve foster care, and some funding for Vice President Biden's Cancer Moonshot.

I support most of these proposals. Heck, I wrote some of them myself. But in the final days of this Congress, the 21st Century Cures bill has been hijacked by Big Pharma and big Republican donors.

Since I first raised concerns about this bill on Monday, the House of Representatives has been feeling the heat. Last night, they took out a ridiculous provision that would have let drug companies hide kickbacks to doctors, and made other improvements. I guess it's hard to defend helping drug companies cover up bribery. The lobbyists are disappointed - but they're still pushing for this bill, because it's still full of industry giveaways.

Join me in telling the House and the Senate to stand up to Big Pharma and vote NO on this bill. Keep fighting for a better deal on the 21st Century Cures Act.

Democrats and Republicans had agreed that a medical innovation bill would not go forward without substantially more money for NIH. But the Cures deal has only a tiny fig leaf of funding for NIH.

21st Century Cures doesn't reduce crushing drug prices. It doesn't really expand the invention of new cures. And it doesn't increase access to lifesaving therapies.

What *does* it do?

- **Legalizes fraud:** It's against the law for drug companies to market drugs for uses not approved by the FDA. You can't sell a headache pill as a cure for cancer. Drug companies have paid billions in penalties for "off-label marketing." Instead of following the law, they've cozied up to Congress to have the Cures bill shoot holes in it.
- **Hands out special deals to GOP donors:** A major Republican donor to Mitch McConnell's Super PAC has big business plans to sell dangerous, unproven stem cell treatments before they have been approved by the FDA as safe and effective. Now that donor is collecting on his investment. The Cures bill creates a special deal so people can sell these treatments without meeting the FDA gold standards for protecting patient safety, undermining the integrity of the FDA and the safety of untold numbers of desperate patients.

There's more: making life harder for people with disabilities, raiding money from the Affordable Care Act, even a gun provision -- but not even a 1% increase in funding for NIH. This bill has been so loaded with stink bombs that you can smell it all over Capitol Hill.

On November 8, a majority of voters supported Democratic Senate candidates, and a majority supported the Democratic presidential candidate over the Republican. The American people didn't vote for Democrats to come back to Washington and play dead while the Republicans hand over control to billionaires and giant corporations. Drug companies and billionaire donors hijacked a decent bill, and we need to take it back or kill it off.

We need to invest in medical innovation in America -- but we shouldn't do it by making it easier for giant drug companies to commit fraud, give out kickbacks, and put

patients' lives at risk. Tell the House and Senate to keep fighting for a better 21st Century Cures Act by voting NO on this deal.

Thanks for being a part of this,

Senator Elizabeth Warren

****

Want to support the Warren wing? Senator Elizabeth Warren says, "When PCCC members donate millions in small-dollar donations and make millions of phone calls for progressive candidates, leaders in Washington, they take notice." Chip in $3 here

.