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PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY STILL TOPS WHEN IT COMES TO MAKING MONEY & PRICE GOUGING SENIORS

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today joined members of the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate to discuss recently released figures showing that the pharmaceutical industry was the most profitable business in 1999.

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"The pharmaceutical companies are number one.□ They're number one when it comes to making money and they're number one when it comes to charging American seniors the highest prices in the world for their medication," Schakowsky said.

According to the recent Fortune 500 report, "Whether you gauge profitability by median return on revenues, assets, or equity, pharmaceuticals had a Viagra kind of year."□ The pharmaceutical industry's 1999 profits ranked number one as a percentage of revenues (18.6%), as a percentage of assets (16.5%), and as a percentage of shareholders' equity (35.8%).□ Overall, the Fortune 500 companies' profits were 5% of revenues, 3.8% of assets, and 15.2% of equity.

"The drug companies are enjoying a continued run of unprecedented profitability, but they are doing so at the expense of millions of senior citizens.□ One out of every eight older Americans is forced to choose between food and prescription drugs.□ Many more try to get by with half a pill or by taking what are supposed to be daily dosages only every other day," Schakowsky said.

"Senior citizens need fair, non-discriminatory drug prices.□ In light of these recent profit figures, there should be no debate over whether the pharmaceutical industry can afford to lower prices.□ The only question is whether the House Republican leadership will continue to protect the industry's exorbitant profits while ignoring the daily struggles faced by our nation's senior citizens," Schakowsky added.