

Drugs, Money and Political Prostitution

Since the year 2000 at least 22 pharmaceutical companies have settled criminal and civil suits for over \$10 billion in fines. Companies have been found guilty of fraud, kickbacks, false claims, and off label promotion. For example, In May 2007 Perdue Pharmaceuticals, makers of the opioid Oxycontin, was found guilty of “off label promotion” and paid over \$600 million in fines, one of the largest in history. This occurred during the acceleration of the opioid epidemic according to the Center for Disease Control. During one of the largest opioid epidemics in history, between 2014 and 2016, the pharmaceutical industry spent more than \$100 million lobbying Congress. Then in April 2016 at the height of the deadliest drug epidemic in US history, and with the knowledge of at least 16 years of criminality by the pharmaceutical industry, “Congress effectively stripped the D.E.A., (drug enforcement administration) of its most potent weapon against large drug companies suspected of spilling prescription narcotics onto the nation streets.” https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2017/investigations/dea-drug-industry-congress/?utm_term=.764ff23c5fd0 . During a massive public health crisis Congress unanimously passed an Act entitled “Ensuring Patient Access and Drug Enforcement Act of 2016” which weakens the DEA’s ability to go after drug distributors. Congress had the audacity to lie about the purpose of the Act in the very definition of the Act: “Factors as may be relevant to and consistent with the public health and safety”. Not one politician voted against this act which was destined to accelerate the opioid epidemic that had already claimed more than 200,000 lives. Could there be a more crystal clear example of politicians servicing the 1%?

Albert Einstein’s comment about craven politicians was right on target when he wrote; “members of legislative bodies are selected by political parties, largely financed or otherwise influenced by private capitalists. The consequence is that the representatives of the people do not in fact sufficiently protect the interest of the underprivileged sections of the population”. <https://monthlyreview.org/2009/05/01/why-socialism/reference> .

A 2014 study by Princeton University supported Einstein in its conclusion: “business interests have substantial independent impact on US government policies while the average citizen have little or no independent influence”.

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/perspectives-on-politics/article/testing-theories-of-american-politics-elites-interest-groups-and-average-citizens/62327F513959D0A304D4893B382B992B>

We currently live under a system that has become “democracy” in word only, where the health of the vast majority is sacrificed to the profits of Corporations. . We the 99% need a new system. Let us build a system without the corruption of money, a system of economic and political egalitarianism.

Dr. Nayvin Gordon, 11/4/2017

Dr. Gordon is a Family Physician in California who has written many articles about health and politics. He can be reached at gordonnayvin@yahoo.com