

added the fine against the company “demonstrates that such blatant and continued disregard of the law will not be tolerated.”

Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius called it a “historic settlement” and said the government is looking “for new ways to prevent fraud before it happens. Healthcare is too important to let a single dollar go to waste.”

Assistant Attorney General Tony West said, “Illegal conduct and fraud by pharmaceutical companies puts the public health at risk, corrupts medical decisions by healthcare providers and costs the government billions of dollars,” adding that the plea agreements “represent yet another example of what penalties will be faced when a pharmaceutical company puts profits ahead of patient welfare.”

Patrick McFarland, inspector general of the Office of Personnel Management, said the settlement “reminds the pharmaceutical industry that it must observe those standards and reflects the commitment of federal law enforcement organizations to pursue improper and illegal conduct that places healthcare consumers at risk.”

The head of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service said that Pfizer’s actions “significantly impacted the integrity of TRICARE, the Department of Defense’s healthcare system,” saying “This illegal activity increases patients’ costs, threatens their safety and negatively affects the delivery of healthcare services to the over 9 million military members, retirees and their families who rely on this system.”

Yet, despite all of these tough statements—and many more by top officials—Pfizer and its vast network of subsidiaries continue to win massive government contracts. Last year Pfizer made more than \$40 billion in profits, and in 2007 it had more than \$73 million in federal contracts.

Loucks points out that “at the very same time Pfizer was in our office negotiating and resolving the allegations of criminal conduct by its then newly acquired subsidiary, Warner-Lambert, Pfizer was itself in its other operations violating those very same laws.” In other words, the criminal conduct continues even as the company settles cases. “The CEO and Board of Directors should have been indicted,” wrote former New York City Mayor Ed Koch. “That is truly the only way to stop the practices which produce so much wealth for the company, its stockholders, officers and directors.”

The glaring question here is, Why is the “corporate felon” Pfizer still on the federal dole? ACORN, which received a total of \$53 million in federal funds over fifteen years, much of it going toward low-income housing initiatives, was singled out for a ban on funding over the actions of a handful of employees that were promptly fired. The fact is, Congress went after ACORN with a legislative nuke but, for years, has greeted Pfizer with welcoming arms and open wallets.

McCollum’s legislation states that no federal contract, grant or “any other form” of agreement “may be awarded to or entered into with the corporation or company for a 5-year period beginning 30 days after the date of the criminal conviction involved” and states that “no Federal funds in any other form may be provided to the corporation or company for such 5-year period.” The legislation also goes after criminal corporations’ ability to inject cash into the campaign coffers of politicians, prohibiting “corporate felons” from “contributing to a candidate for federal office, to a political party, or to a federal political action committee for five years.”

In 2008 Pfizer gave \$980,048 in campaign contributions to Democrats, representing 52 percent of its total campaign contributions.

It was the first year since 1990 that Pfizer gave more to Democrats than Republicans. The biggest recipients of Pfizer campaign dollars last year were Democratic Congressman Allen Boyd, who serves on the Appropriations Committee, and Democratic Senator Chris Dodd, a senior member of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. In the 2010 cycle, the company has given 60 percent of its campaign cash to Democrats. Barack Obama blew out John McCain in contributions from the pharmaceutical industry, taking in some \$2.1 million compared to the \$668,000 contributed to McCain’s campaign.

McCollum’s legislation would limit the amount of lobbying expenditures by “corporate felons” to \$1 million a calendar year. In 2009 Pfizer has already spent \$11,720,000 on lobbying.

ACORN does not have high-powered lobbyists, and its 400,000 member families do not give major campaign contributions. If they did, the Defund Acorn bill would never have passed Congress. The question for those Democrats who voted to go after this community organization on dubious allegations is a simple one: will you apply that standard to actual corporate felons with real-life rap sheets whose actions have actually harmed ordinary Americans and ripped off taxpayers?

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

OLDER DRIVER AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AND ROADWAY ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2009

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ALTMIRE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of legislation that I have introduced that will help reduce the number of deaths and injuries occurring on our Nation’s roadways.

H.R. 3355, the Older Driver and Pedestrian Safety and Roadway Enhancement Act of 2009, authorizes \$500 million annually to be distributed to States from the existing highway trust fund to make our roads safer for older Americans. These funds can be used to make roadway improvements as described in the Federal Highway Administration’s Older Driver Handbook.

While older drivers have years of experience behind the wheel, they often require more time than younger drivers to react to changes on the road and are sometimes restricted in movement and cannot always meet the physical demands of turning to look at a blind spot or making sharp turns. According to the American Traffic Safety Services Association and the National Association of County Engineers’ “Low Cost Local Road Safety Solutions” publication, simple changes to signs and markings have a proven track record of being both affordable and extremely effective at reducing roadway deaths and injuries.

Some examples of these vital road safety improvements that would be funded by this legislation are signs with more legible font, retro-reflective sheeting and retro-reflective pavement markings, left turn lanes at intersections and improved sign placement to ensure that drivers have adequate time to make informed decisions on the road.

Last year, more than 37,000 men, women and children perished on America’s roadways. This bill will be an effective step forward in reducing this sobering statistic. According to the AARP’s Public Policy Institute, as of 2003, 80 percent of persons age 65 and older were licensed drivers, and 90 percent of all trips by older Americans are by automobile, whether as a driver or passenger. This is especially true in suburban and rural areas where mass transportation systems are limited or nonexistent. By 2020, one in five licensed drivers will be 65 years or older. By 2025, this number is expected to be one in four.

With Congress continuing to debate the next transportation authorization, it is important that we do not lose sight of the older citizens in our communities. By improving the safety of our roads and highways and making their daily travel as safe as possible, we increase road safety for all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this legislation that will improve road safety in every one of their districts. Please join me in raising awareness for road safety and the wellbeing of older and younger drivers alike by supporting H.R. 3355.

AMERICA FUNDING OFFSHORE DRILLING IN BRAZIL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, just one short year ago, the ban was lifted for drilling for oil on the Outer Continental Shelf. We call that the OCS. And that was a good thing. We should be one year closer to all those high-paying jobs. We should be one year closer to that shot in the arm for the American economy. We should be one year closer to American energy independence. But we’re not.

Not by a long shot, because, you see, Mr. Speaker, the government still stonewalls offshore drilling. And that’s unfortunate for America. Between the OCS and oil shale resources, America could replace all of the oil Saudi Arabia sends us for the next 20 years. And that’s a lot of oil.

During that time, we could explore and develop other alternative energies to power our economy in the future. Also, by providing for our own energy with natural gas, solar, oil and nuclear, all of those issues are national security issues, so we won’t depend on foreign countries for our energy in the future.