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**Summary of legislation included

KENNEDY ON GENETIC INFORMATION NONDISCRIMINATION ACT

WASHINGTON, DC— Today, Senator Edward M. Kennedy released the following statement on the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act. A bipartisan agreement has been reached and the bill may move forward to the floor of the United States Senate as early as this week.

“This needed legislation will help unlock the extraordinary potential of this new era of the life sciences, and I'm pleased that we have been able to reach bipartisan agreement. I hope the Senate will be able to vote on this legislation at the earliest opportunity.”

THE GENETIC INFORMATION NONDISCRIMINATION ACT

Scientists have now completed the historic task of deciphering the entire DNA sequence of the human genetic code. This new knowledge is already allowing doctors to develop better ways to diagnose, prevent or treat some of the most feared diseases known to humanity. For genetic research to fulfill its promise to improve health, patients must be able to receive its benefits free from the fear that genetic information will be used as a basis for discrimination.

The bipartisan Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act addresses these legitimate fears. This legislation will establish strong protections against discrimination based on genetic information in health insurance and employment. Support for the bill has come from a wide range of organizations representing patients, medical professionals, families and employees. We should give all Americans the comprehensive protections against genetic discrimination in health insurance and employment they deserve by enacting this important legislation.

With regard to health insurance discrimination, the Act will:

- **PROHIBIT** enrollment restriction and premium adjustment on the basis of genetic information or genetic services;
- **PREVENT** health plans and insurers from requesting or requiring that an individual take a genetic test; and
- **COVER** all health insurance programs, including those under ERISA, state regulated plans, and the individual market.

With regard to employment discrimination, the Act will:

- **PROHIBIT** discrimination in hiring, compensation, and other personnel processes;
- **PROHIBIT** the collection of genetic information, and allow genetic testing only to monitor the adverse effects of hazardous workplace exposures;
- **REQUIRE** genetic information possessed by employers to be confidentially maintained and disclosed only to the employee or under other tightly controlled circumstances; and
- **COVER** employers, employment agencies, labor organizations, and training programs.

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