



For Immediate Release

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KENNEDY, ENZI, SNOWE, SLAUGHTER TO DISCUSS GINA PASSAGE

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senator Edward Kennedy, Chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, Senator Mike Enzi, Ranking Member of the HELP Committee, Senator Olympia Snowe, and Representative Louise Slaughter will speak with reporters today, April 24th, following the expected passage of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) in the Senate print press gallery, located on the third floor of the United States Capitol. The vote is expected to occur around 2:00 PM.

The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act will prohibit genetic discrimination by health insurers and employers who may attempt to use genetic information against persons with potential health problems. A summary of the legislation is included below.

- WHO:** Senator Edward Kennedy
Senator Mike Enzi
Senator Olympia Snowe
Representative Louise Slaughter
- WHAT:** Press availability on GINA passage
- WHEN:** TODAY at approximately 2:20pm, Thursday, April 24th, following the vote on GINA
- WHERE:** S- 316, the Senate Print Press Gallery—third floor of the United States Capitol

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 on the basis of genetic information in hiring, compensation, and other personnel processes;
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- **PROHIBIT** the collection of genetic information, and allow genetic testing only in very limited circumstances, such as monitoring 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.

