



February 15, 2005

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Jennifer Lieb, Sc.M.
Legislative Fellow
Senator Kennedy
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
527 Hart Building
Washington, DC 20501

RE: S.306 The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act

Dear Ms. Lieb,

The Association for Molecular Pathology (AMP) is pleased to support the above bill introduced this week that provides, for the first time, a comprehensive set of protections against discrimination on the basis of genetic information in the issuance of insurance and the setting of premiums, and prevents misuse of genetic information in the workplace. The White House has clearly stated support for passage of the same legislation in the last Congress, S.1053.

AMP is an international, not-for-profit, educational society representing over one thousand physicians, doctoral scientists, medical technologists and other professionals who perform molecular genetic testing. AMP members practice their specialty in academic medical centers, independent medical laboratories, community hospitals, federal and state health laboratories, and the *in vitro* diagnostic industry. In this capacity, AMP members are involved in every aspect of molecular genetic testing, including administration and interpretation of molecular genetic tests, research and development, education and regulatory issues. Since its inception ten years ago, AMP has provided national leadership in the advancement of safe and effective practice and education related to molecular genetic testing in clinical medicine.

With the rapid advances in our understanding of human genetics, genetic testing will play an increasingly important role in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease. Individuals must be protected against the misuse of their genetic information, which could lead to discrimination in insurance coverage or employment. While many states have enacted some form of genetic non-discrimination legislation, these laws are quite varied in their focus and scope. Federal legislation would assure individuals and families in our mobile society that neither healthcare coverage nor employment status would be jeopardized by the genetic testing necessary for their medical care.

Moreover, researchers rely on voluntary participation in research studies to further advance our understanding of the function of genes in health and disease. Passage of a federal law against genetic discrimination will eliminate some of the concerns (real or perceived) that have deterred individuals from participating in genetic research studies or seeking genetic testing. This protection will speed the progress of our understanding of the genetic contributions to many medical conditions and facilitate the development of effective targeted treatments and preventive strategies.

Thank you for your leadership and swift action on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Mark A. Lovell, M.D.'.

Mark A. Lovell, M.D.
President