



# News Release

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## **BREAK-THROUGH LAW BARS GENETIC DISCRIMINATION**

Statement by American Academy of Pediatrics President Renée R. Jenkins, MD, FAAP, on the presidential signing of the Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act

“Today, the genetic revolution in health care can truly begin. For the first time since the development of genetic tests, parents can rest assured that they and their children will not lose their health insurance or their jobs just because their genetic make-up says they are at risk for a specific disease.

“When the first genetic tests were developed, key leaders in Congress saw the future—both the possibility of life-saving and life-changing medical advances, and the potential risks to families who sought to take advantage of this new genetic knowledge. Unfortunately, in the 13 years that it took to pass this legislation, some families did suffer the negative consequences of this medical knowledge, facing job and insurance discrimination.

“Today, we have changed that story. Today, parents have the freedom to take greater control of their family’s health and, in case of such genetic diseases as diabetes, take the preventive steps needed to stay healthy. Today, we have broken down one more potential barrier to ensuring all children have health care coverage. Today, with more than 1,200 genetic tests available and many more in development, we can pursue once unprecedented opportunities to improve the diagnosis and treatment of many childhood diseases. Today is a day of celebration for families and children.

“The American Academy of Pediatrics thanks the following congressional leaders for their ability to create such broad bipartisan support for this legislation and their tireless efforts to get it passed: Sens. Olympia Snowe (R-ME), Edward Kennedy (D-MA.), Mike Enzi ((R-WY) and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV); and Reps. Louise Slaughter (R-NY), Judy Biggert (R-IL) and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA).

“The AAP also thanks President Bush for swiftly signing the Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act into law.”

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*The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults.*