

James C. Greenwood
President & CEO

April 15, 2008

The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Kennedy:

On behalf of the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO), I am writing to express our strong support for S.358, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA). BIO represents more than 1,200 biotechnology companies, academic institutions, state biotechnology centers and related organizations that are involved in the research and development of health care, agricultural, industrial and environmental biotechnology products including healthcare technologies related to genetic-based diagnostics, biologics, therapeutics, and research tools.

Passage of genetic nondiscrimination legislation will ensure that patients can enjoy the benefits of medical advances that are occurring through our enhanced knowledge of genetics, without fear of discrimination. We are beginning an era of personalized medicine, where each individual's health care is shaped according to his or her individual genetic make-up. Through personalized medicine, physicians will be able to determine susceptibility to particular health conditions and identify preventative strategies. When symptoms do manifest, doctors will be better able to select appropriate therapies and/or dosages that maximize benefits and reduce side effects. It will be an era of greatly improved patient-based healthcare and better utilization of healthcare dollars.

Unfortunately, public fear and anxiety may greatly slow down or impede the promise of personalized medicine. If patients fear misuse by employers and insurers of the results from genetic tests, they may decline to be tested and may not volunteer for clinical trials. Passage of genetic nondiscrimination legislation ensures that patients can receive the best possible care without fear, and that biomedical research is not inhibited.

BIO has long supported national policies to ensure that individuals' personal medical information, including genetic information, is safeguarded against misuse. It is essential to assure the public that the great promise of biotechnology research will not be tarnished by abuses of this technology. It is therefore vital that Congress reassures the public by enacting genetic nondiscrimination legislation. We applaud you for your leadership in ensuring that GINA becomes law in 2008.

BIO appreciates your support of the biotech industry and look forward to working with you. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me or Brent Del Monte, Vice President of Government Relations, at (202) 962-9200.

Sincerely,



James C. Greenwood
President and CEO