



The Organization of Specialists  
in Emergency Medicine

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March 30, 2005

The Honorable John Ensign  
364 Russell Senate Office Building  
Unites States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510-2805

Dear Senator Ensign:

The American Academy of Emergency Medicine (AAEM) strongly supports S.354, the **HEALTH (Help Efficient Accessible, Low-Cost, Timely Health Care) Act of 2005**. The Academy applauds your leadership for introducing this greatly needed legislation to help reform our medical liability system by addressing two crucial concerns – the high costs of health care and patient access to their doctor and hospital. As you stated when introducing this legislation, "Medical liability reform is not a Republican or Democrat issue or even a doctor versus lawyer issue. It is a patient issue."

AAEM represents more than 4,000 board certified emergency medicine physicians who encounter the negative effects of rapidly rising liability insurance rates on a daily basis. Skyrocketing medical liability premiums – \$200,000 a year or more in some high-risk specialties – are debilitating the nation's health care delivery system forcing physicians to limit services, retire early, or move to a state with reforms where premiums are more stable. Many emergency physicians find themselves unable to obtain needed specialty consultation for victims of trauma. The emergency physicians themselves are finding it difficult to sustain their practice because of rising liability costs coupled with large numbers of uninsured or underinsured patients. Without federal legislation, the crisis in our nation's emergency departments will continue to grow and patients will find it increasingly difficult to obtain needed health care. The truth is every American pays the price for this country's liability crisis.

We look forward to the enactment of S.354 and offer our resources to bring this legislation to reality this year. If we can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact Kathleen Ream, AAEM's Director of Government Affairs, at 703-241-3974.

Sincerely yours,

A. Antoine Kazzi, MD FAAEM