



March 30, 2005

The Organization of Specialists
in Emergency Medicine

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The Honorable Judd Gregg
393 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

Dear Senators Gregg and Ensign:

The American Academy of Emergency Medicine (AAEM), the specialty society of board certified emergency medicine physicians, wishes to express its strong support for S.367, the **Pregnancy and Trauma Care Access Protection Act of 2005**. The Academy applauds your leadership for reintroducing 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 emergency and trauma care.

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. Liability insurers are leaving the market or raising rates to astronomical levels.

This crisis is seriously affecting emergency and trauma care. We have already seen closure of trauma centers and many general emergency departments cannot find specialty physicians who are able to take "ED coverage call" because of the high liability risk. This "on-call crisis" results in an increased need to transfer patients, causes delays in care, and threatens the health of our citizens. Without federal legislation, the difficulties facing the practice of emergency medicine will continue to worsen. The truth is every American pays the price for this country's medical liability crisis.

We look forward to the enactment of S.367 and offer our resources to bring this legislation to reality. 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 FAEM