



**American Academy
of Emergency Medicine**

July 7, 2006

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The Honorable Michael B. Enzi
Chairman
Senate Health, Education, Labor and
Pensions Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Max Baucus
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Enzi and Senator Baucus:

The American Academy of Emergency Medicine (AAEM), representing more than 5,000 board certified emergency medicine physicians, strongly supports the concept of special health care courts as contained in S. 1337, the **Fair and Reliable Medical Justice Act**. We applaud your leadership for introducing this legislation which includes funding for state demonstration programs to implement alternatives, including health courts, to the current medical malpractice legal dispute system.

Litigation discourages the exchange of critical information that could be used to improve the quality and safety of patient care. The constant threat of litigation drives the inefficient, costly, and even dangerous practice of "defensive medicine." Some estimates suggest that Americans will pay \$70 billion for defensive medicine in 2006. AAEM believes that special health care courts would insert more fairness and reliability into the system while lowering medical malpractice insurance premiums.

We look forward to the enactment of S. 1337 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,

Tom Scaletta, MD

The Organization of Specialists in Emergency Medicine

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