



February 23, 2004

The Honorable Judd Gregg
Chairman, Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee
United States Senate
835 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the 126 medical schools, nearly 400 major teaching hospitals and health systems, more than 105,000 faculty in 98 academic and scientific societies, and the nation's 66,000 medical students and 97,000 residents represented by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), I write to urge a "Yea" vote on the motion to invoke cloture with regard to your legislation, the "Healthy Mothers and Healthy Babies Access to Care Act of 2003" (S. 2061). Your legislation takes an important first step toward urgently needed comprehensive medical liability reform that will benefit all patients, physicians, and healthcare institutions.

The deteriorating medical liability system presents a serious threat to the education, research, and patient care missions of already fiscally vulnerable academic physician practices and teaching hospitals. Recent analyses of AAMC physician practice survey data and hospital data indicate that academic physicians and teaching hospitals bear a substantial and rising insurance risk because academic physician groups and teaching hospitals' emergency departments and inpatient units provide care for more complex cases. The developing medical liability crisis is also affecting the training and education of medical students and residents, the time and investment allotted to clinical research, and the faculty morale at medical schools and teaching hospitals.

The AAMC appreciate your leadership in this area. We look forward to working with you to bring Senate-passed reform legislation to conference with the House-passed "HEALTH Act" (H.R. 5), which the AAMC strongly supports.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jordan J. Cohen'.

Jordan J. Cohen, M.D.

Cc: Senator Bill Frist