

Date: 02-24-05

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**LEGISLATION INTRODUCED TO PROTECT VACCINE MANUFACTURES
FROM LEGAL LIABILITY DUE TO UNSAFE VACCINES**

SafeMinds Urges Opposition to HR 650

Washington, DC—SafeMinds announced today its opposition to HR 650, inappropriately titled “The Vaccine Accessibility for Children and Seniors Act of 2005” which removes a legal remedy for those injured by vaccines. The title of Representative Ric Keller’s (FL-8) bill is deceptive in that it exclusively addresses product liability lawsuits against vaccine makers.

HR 650 addresses neither increased access to vaccines for children nor seniors; rather the legislation seeks to impose barriers to legal remedies for the vaccine-injured, including those injured from exposure to the mercury-based preservative thimerosal. SafeMinds is the nation’s leading organization fighting to rid mercury from all medicines and promoting treatment research for those already injured.

“Each time legislation is introduced to protect the vaccine industry from product liability it is hidden behind a nice title or buried inside legislative minutia,” stated Lyn Redwood, President of SafeMinds. “In 2002 legislators attempted a comparable end run on our civil rights by inserting similar language in the Homeland Security Bill, literally in the dark of night. Only when the American people spoke up in outrage was the move repealed. When faulty tires on SUVs were rampant, legislators didn’t recommend that the tire or automotive manufacturers be protected from litigation. It is beyond comprehension that when there are increased questions about vaccine injury that legislators would introduce legislation to take away Americans’ rights. An injured child is never frivolous.”

HR 650 seeks to shield vaccine manufactures from any litigation based upon a report by the Institute of Medicine (IOM). That report has been highly criticized by members of Congress for its lack of balance, over reliance on questionable epidemiology, and failure to consider credible laboratory and animal research showing thimerosal caused brain injury. The bill further deters any litigation against vaccine makers by threatening families of injured children and their lawyers with severe financial penalties should they lose in court.

SafeMinds encourages all Members of Congress, health professionals, industry, and the public health community to oppose this legislation and work to ensure that families retain their rights for effective legal recourse for the vaccine injured.

For more information about SafeMinds go to: www.safeminds.org

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