



**Representative Louise M. Slaughter
Chairwoman, House Committee on Rules**

P R E S S R E L E A S E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Slaughter Urges Obama Administration Not to Waffle
on Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act**

WASHINGTON – Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY) today released a copy of a bi-partisan letter she sent to three of President Barack Obama’s Cabinet secretaries in an effort to ensure timely implementation of sections in the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA), which prevents Americans from being discriminated against because of their genetic makeup. Slaughter was joined by eight House members in writing the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Treasury.

Slaughter’s bill was approved last year and it has gone into effect in stages. This section, which enforces laws as they relate to health insurance, takes effect on December 7th. The letter was signed by Henry A. Waxman, Chairman, Energy and Commerce Committee; Charles B. Rangel, Chairman, Ways and Means Committee; George Miller, Chairman, Education and Labor Committee; Frank Pallone, Chairman, Subcommittee on Health, Energy and Commerce Committee; Pete Stark, Chairman, Subcommittee on Health, Ways and Means Committee; John D. Dingell, Chairman Emeritus, House Energy and Commerce Committee; Rosa L. DeLauro, Member of Congress; Judy Biggert, Member of Congress.

A copy of the letter is below:

Dear Secretaries Geithner, Sebelius and Solis:

We are writing to congratulate you on the issuance of the interim final rule implementing Sections 101-103 of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) and strongly support its taking effect on December 7, 2009.

The interim final rule will provide strong protections for individuals against health insurance discrimination on the basis of their genetic information, and for this reason we oppose any delay or moratorium to its implementation. The regulations are unequivocally an accurate

reflection of the law passed and of the intent of Congress. The law was written to allow employees and enrollees the right to keep their genetic information private and to ensure that those who did so were not penalized. It also states that genetic information may not be used for underwriting purposes.

The law further clarifies that genetic information may not be used to determine eligibility for enrollment or benefits, or to set premiums or other contribution amounts. Participation in a wellness plan which requests genetic information must be voluntary, and, to protect against coercion, it does not allow for the provision of any benefits and rewards to be contingent on enrollees revealing their genetic information.

It took 13 years for Congress to pass GINA, passing the Senate unanimously and the House by an overwhelming vote of 414-1. It has been 18 months since the legislation was signed into law by President Bush and we strongly support the implementation of the interim final rule to protect against genetic discrimination.

Sincerely,

Louise M. Slaughter
Chairwoman, House Rules Committee

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