



September 30, 2004

The Honorable Arlen Specter
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-3802

Dear Senator Specter:

I am writing on behalf of the 11,000 members of The Endocrine Society to express our concerns over a recent trend by federal agencies to ignore scientific evidence when making policy decisions. In response to these concerns we are asking you to support an amendment successfully included by Representative Carolyn Maloney during House deliberations of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and Related Agencies Appropriations Act FY 2005 (H.R. 4766) that will protect the integrity of scientific evidence during agency rule making. The amendment, which reasserts current law, states that if the FDA finds a drug to be safe and effective for over the counter (OTC) use, the FDA cannot withhold the drug from OTC use for non-statutory reasons.

Numerous examples in recent years have created an alarming precedence that allows political appointees undue ideological influence on policy decisions while ignoring scientific evidence. Several FDA Advisory Committee decisions have been overruled after being reviewed by agency administrators despite overwhelming scientific evidence supporting the advisory committee's findings.

As you are aware, scientific advisory committees assure that the government hears from the nation's top experts in a particular field before creating policy in that area. The Federal Advisory Committee Act requires that such committees be "fairly balanced in terms of the points of view represented" and requires that advice and recommendations "not be inappropriately influenced by the appointing authority or by any special interest."

The Endocrine Society feels that the Maloney amendment protects the spirit of the Federal Advisory Committee Act by eliminating political ideology in agency decision making. Again, we ask that you support the Maloney amendment throughout the entire appropriations process when considering H.R. 4766. The Endocrine Society represents over 11,000 researchers and clinicians in the field of endocrinology and promotes excellence in hormone research and care of patients with endocrine disease.

Sincerely,

Anthony R Means, MS, PhD
President