



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 4, 2017

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Bill S-201 Genetic Non-Discrimination Act: Genetic Test Information is Now Protected

(Kitchener, ON) May 4, 2017 - The Chair of the Canadian Coalition for Genetic Fairness (CCGF), and CEO of the Huntington Society of Canada, Bev Heim-Myers, is pleased to announce that Bill S-201 (A Genetic Non-Discrimination Act) has received Royal Assent and is now law in Canada.

Bill S-201 passed 3rd Reading in the House of Commons, as it was presented, by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights on Wednesday March 8, 2017. On April 4, 2017, the Senate, unanimously supported Bill S-201 and sent it back to the House.

“Finally, Canada no longer lags behind other western jurisdictions with regards to protection of genetic test information and our legislation has caught up to science and medicine.” stated Heim-Myers. “This is a good day for Canada and a significant step forward for the health and wellbeing of all Canadians. Our voices have been heard. However, if the Liberal Cabinet follows through on their intent to refer Bill S-201 to the Supreme Court of Canada, the Canadian Coalition for Genetic Fairness will seek intervenor status”.

Since the Genome Project was launched in the early 1990s, Canada has been the only G7 country that has not taken steps to prevent genetic discrimination. Heim-Myers is quick to point out the tireless efforts of all members of the Coalition, without their support genetic fairness in Canada would not have come this far. Heim-Myers, extends special thanks to Senator James Cowan for being a champion of the Bill and seeing it through the Senate and tireless efforts of MP Rob Oliphant for stewarding Bill S-201 through the House.

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The **Canadian Coalition for Genetic Fairness (CCGF/CCEG)** is a coalition of organizations dedicated to preventing genetic discrimination for all Canadians. The Coalition is deeply concerned about discrimination against individuals based on their genetic make-up. We are united to educate Canadians about genetic discrimination and to influence governments both federal and provincial, and other relevant organizations to create change. CCGF/CCEG currently represents 18 hereditary genetic diseases in Canada.



Members of CCGF/CCEG are:

ALS Society of Canada	Alzheimer Society of Canada
Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation	CORD
The Foundation Fighting Blindness	Huntington Society of Canada
Kidney Foundation of Canada	Muscular Dystrophy Canada
Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada	Osteoporosis Canada
Ovarian Cancer Canada	Parkinson Society of Canada
Tourette Syndrome Foundation of Canada	Centre for Molecular Medicine and Therapeutics
Canadian PKU & Allied Disorders	Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Association of Canada
The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs	The Canadian Breast Cancer Society
Canadian Congenital Heart Alliance	Individual Members

The **Huntington Society of Canada** is the founding organization of the Canadian Coalition for Genetic Fairness (CCGF). CCGF is dedicated to preventing genetic discrimination for all Canadians. Canada is no longer the only G7 country that does not protect its citizens against genetic discrimination.

Bill S-201, An Act to Prohibit and Prevent Genetic Discrimination, prohibits any person from requiring an individual to undergo a genetic test or disclose the results of a genetic test as a condition of providing goods or services to, entering into or continuing a contract or agreement with, or offering specific conditions in a contract or agreement with, the individual. Exceptions are provided for health care practitioners and researchers. The enactment provides individuals with other protections related to genetic testing and test results.

The enactment amends the Canada Labour Code to protect employees from being required to undergo or to disclose the results of a genetic test, and provides employees with other protections related to genetic testing and test results. It also amends the Canadian Human Rights Act to prohibit discrimination on the ground of genetic characteristics.

(Summary of Bill S-201 from openparliament.ca).

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