



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Genetic Fairness One Step Closer to Canadians Making Informed Decisions**

### **About Their Health – Without Fear**

(Kitchener, ON) March 9, 2017 - The Canadian Coalition for Genetic Fairness (CCGF) is pleased to announce that Bill S-201 (An Act to Prohibit and Prevent Genetic Discrimination in Canada) was passed in the House of Commons, as it was presented, by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights on Wednesday March 8, 2017. “Tonight we witnessed that democracy truly works. We are a giant step closer to Canadians making informed decisions about their health - *without fear*,” said Bev Heim-Myers, Chair of the Coalition for Genetic Fairness and CEO of the Huntington Society of Canada (HSC).

“Although Bill S-201 must go back to the Senate all indications point to it being fully supported,” say Heim-Myers. “Finally, Canada has caught up to other western jurisdictions in regards to protection of genetic information and our legislation has caught up to science.”

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. On March 8, 2017, Canada changed that. On behalf of the Canadian Coalition for Generic Fairness, Heim-Myers commends the government for taking an important step forward and raising the urgent need to end genetic discrimination in Canada. “Bill S-201 will end genetic discrimination in Canada. This is beneficial to all Canadians today and for generations to come.”

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 credits the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights for unanimously passing Bill S-201 to the House of Commons, the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights (chaired by MP Anthony Housefather) for their professionalism and true commitment to listen to the experts, ask the right questions and make the right decision for all Canadians. She also extends special thanks to Senator James Cowan for being a champion of the Bill and seeing it through to 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-S201, 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](http://openparliament.ca)).*

**For more information, please contact:**

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