



**For immediate release:** 23rd March 2010  
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## **New Legislation Protects Your Right to Know About the Science Behind Dietary Supplements**

### ***Congressmen Chaffetz and Polis introduce historic Free Speech About Science Act***

Washington, DC - Today Congressmen Jason Chaffetz (R, UT) and Jared Polis (D, CO) introduced the Free Speech About Science Act (H.R. 4913). This landmark legislation protects basic free speech rights, ends government censorship of science, and enables the natural health products community to share peer-reviewed scientific findings about natural health products with the public.

The Alliance for Natural health USA (ANH-USA) describes Free Speech About Science as a small bill with very large potential leverage. It has the potential to transform the healthcare field by educating the public about the real science behind natural health.

Current law prevents the natural health industry from disseminating respected scientific information about the specific health benefits of natural health products. In the FDA's view, even providing a link on a website to a scientific study conducted at Harvard converts a healthy fruit or nut into an unapproved drug. According to ANH-USA, this is a bizarre result that effectively denies Americans scientific information that could alleviate their illnesses or even save their lives. As ANH-USA points out, FDA approval for a new drug easily costs a billion dollars. But without going through this process, a natural product manufacturer cannot share the health benefits of a product with the public.

Drug companies can only pay these vast sums because they have patent protection and will use that patent protection to create a monopoly on the sale of the product. By contrast, natural products cannot usually be patented and therefore cannot usually be brought through such an expensive approval process.

According to ANH-USA Executive and Legal Director, Gretchen DuBeau, "This is what we have called the great Catch 22 of contemporary American medicine. Doctors are afraid to prescribe non-FDA approved medications. They can lose their licenses for doing so. But with very few exceptions, only non-natural and therefore patentable substances can be brought through the FDA approval process."

"The result is that the natural products industry is gagged and unable to share information with the public that is essential to leading a healthy lifestyle," adds DuBeau.

The Free Speech About Science Act addresses access to information by providing a very carefully targeted change to FDA regulations. It says that legitimate, peer reviewed scientific studies may be referenced by manufacturers and producers without converting a healthy food or dietary supplement into an unapproved drug. The bill amends the appropriate sections of current law to allow the flow of legitimate scientific and educational information while still giving FDA and FTC the right to take action against misleading information and against false and unsubstantiated claims.

“It is important for individuals and families to take charge of their personal health by making the right decisions to get and stay healthy,” said Chaffetz. “This includes accessing information so that individuals can adjust habits, eat healthy, and take appropriate dietary supplements to prevent and even treat health conditions. The Free Speech About Science Act helps insure their access to legitimate scientific research to make the necessary decisions to improve their personal health and the health of their families.”

“Today’s science has shown that vitamins and nutritional supplements can offer successful, natural alternatives to drugs,” said Polis. “As we begin to reform our nation’s healthcare system, supplements are an innovative way to help reduce costs. The Free Speech About Science Act is a common sense act that will make it easier for doctors and consumers to learn about the cheaper, healthier alternatives to costly medicines that food and nutritional supplements provide.”

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**NOTES TO THE EDITOR:**

**About the Alliance for Natural Health USA (ANH-USA):**

[www.anh-usa.org](http://www.anh-usa.org)

ANH-USA is part of an international organization dedicated to promoting sustainable healthcare and freedom of choice in healthcare through good science and good law. We protect the right of natural-health practitioners to practice and the right of consumers to choose the healthcare options they prefer by lobbying Congress and state legislatures; educating the public, press, and decision-makers about integrative medicine; initiating legal actions; and joining and forming significant coalitions. As a membership-based organization, we unite consumers, practitioners, and industry to speak with a common voice and have worked since 1992 to shift the medical paradigm from an exclusive focus on surgery, drugs and other conventional techniques to an “integrative” approach incorporating food, dietary supplements and lifestyle changes.