

107TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 2234

To amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for expanding, intensifying, and coordinating activities of the Office on Women’s Health in the Department of Health and Human Services with respect to autoimmune diseases in women.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 23, 2002

Mrs. BOXER introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

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## A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for expanding, intensifying, and coordinating activities of the Office on Women’s Health in the Department of Health and Human Services with respect to autoimmune diseases in women.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Women’s Autoimmune  
5 Diseases Research and Prevention Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds that—

1           (1) The term “autoimmune disease” refers to a  
2 varied group of more than 80 serious, chronic ill-  
3 nesses that involve the human organ system, the  
4 nervous, gastrointestinal and endocrine systems, the  
5 skin and other connective tissues, eyes, and blood  
6 and blood vessels.

7           (2) These diseases include, but are not limited  
8 to, Epstein-Barr virus, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis,  
9 scleroderma, multiple sclerosis, Guillain-Barré syn-  
10 drome, Hashimoto’s thyroiditis, Graves’ disease, and  
11 vasculitis syndromes.

12           (3) 50 million Americans are afflicted with  
13 some form of autoimmune disease.

14           (4) 75 percent of autoimmune diseases occur in  
15 women, most frequently during but not limited to  
16 the childbearing years.

17           (5) Taken together, autoimmune diseases rep-  
18 resent the fourth largest cause of disability among  
19 women in the United States.

20           (6) Female-to-male ratios in autoimmune dis-  
21 eases are dramatically skewed toward women, in  
22 some cases by ratios as high as 50 to 1.

23           (7) Autoimmune diseases remain among the  
24 most poorly understood and poorly recognized of any  
25 category of illnesses; while science suggest they may

1 have a genetic component, they can cluster in fami-  
2 lies as different illnesses.

3 (8) To help women live longer, healthier lives,  
4 more research is needed to shed light on genetic as  
5 well as hormonal and environmental risk factors that  
6 contribute to the causes of these diseases, as well as  
7 providing early diagnosis and treatment.

8 **SEC. 3. EXPANSION AND INTENSIFICATION OF ACTIVITIES**  
9 **REGARDING AUTOIMMUNE DISEASES ON**  
10 **WOMEN.**

11 Part P of title III of the Public Health Service Act  
12 (42 U.S.C. 280g et seq.) is amended by adding at the end  
13 the following new section:

14 **“SEC. 399o. AUTOIMMUNE DISEASES IN WOMEN.**

15 “(a) DEFINITION.—In this section, an ‘autoimmune  
16 disease’ means an illness in which the body’s immune sys-  
17 tem becomes misdirected, attacking the organs it was de-  
18 signed to protect. It includes, but is not limited to, Ep-  
19 stein-Barr virus, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, scleroderma,  
20 multiple sclerosis, Guillain-Barré syndrome, Hashimoto’s  
21 throiditis, Graves disease, and vasculitis syndromes.

22 “(b) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Office on  
23 Women’s Health in the Department of Health and Human  
24 Services shall expand, intensify, and coordinate research

1 and related activities of the Department with respect to  
2 autoimmune diseases in women.

3 “(c) COORDINATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTES.—

4 The Director of the Office on Women’s Health shall co-  
5 ordinate activities under subsection (b) with other similar  
6 activities conducted by the other national research insti-  
7 tutes and agencies of the National Institutes of Health  
8 to the extent that such Institutes and agencies have re-  
9 sponsibilities that are related to autoimmune diseases in  
10 women.

11 “(d) CERTAIN PROGRAMS.—In carrying out sub-

12 section (b), the Director of the Office of Women’s Health  
13 shall conduct or support research to expand the under-  
14 standing of the causes of, and develop methods for pre-  
15 venting, autoimmune diseases in women. Activities under  
16 such subsection shall include conducting and supporting  
17 the following:

18 “(1) Research to determine the prevalence of  
19 autoimmune diseases in women, including African  
20 American women and other women who are mem-  
21 bers of racial or ethnic minority groups.

22 “(2) Basic research concerning the etiology and  
23 causes of autoimmune diseases in women, including  
24 genetic, hormonal, and environmental factors.

1           “(3) Epidemiological studies to address the fre-  
2           quency and natural history of such diseases and the  
3           differences among men and women, and among ra-  
4           cial and ethnic groups, with respect to such diseases.

5           “(4) The development of safe, efficient, and  
6           cost-effective diagnostic approaches to evaluating  
7           women with suspected autoimmune diseases.

8           “(5) Clinical research for the development and  
9           evaluation of new treatments for women, including  
10          rehabilitation.

11          “(6) Studies to gain a better understanding of  
12          methods of preventing autoimmune diseases in  
13          women.

14          “(7) Information and education programs for  
15          patients and health care providers on genetic, hor-  
16          monal, and environmental risk factors associated  
17          with autoimmune diseases in women, and on the im-  
18          portance of the prevention or control of such risk  
19          factors and timely referral with appropriate diag-  
20          nosis and treatment. Such programs shall include in-  
21          formation and education on the prevalence and na-  
22          ture of autoimmune diseases in women, and on  
23          health-related behaviors that can improve certain  
24          risk factors.

1       “(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For the  
2 purpose of carrying out this section, there are authorized  
3 to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary for  
4 each of the fiscal years 2003 through 2007. The author-  
5 ization of appropriations established in the preceding sen-  
6 tence is in addition to any other authorization of appro-  
7 priation that is available for such purpose.”.

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