



Position Paper

A bill to ban dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA), S. 762

Issue: S. 762, which was introduced on March 9, 2007, would ban the substance dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA) under the Controlled Substances Act, despite the fact that DHEA was specifically exempted from regulation under legislation enacted into law in 2004.

Background: In 2004, Congress passed and the President signed into law the Anabolic Steroid Control Act, which provided for the listing of steroid hormone precursors such as androstenedione ("andro") under the Controlled Substances Act. This statute now prohibits the marketing of these substances as dietary supplements by regulating them as Schedule III controlled substances. However, the Anabolic Steroid Control Act contained a provision that exempted the dietary ingredient DHEA, a prohormone with little or no potential for abuse as a performance-enhancing ingredient, but with demonstrated value in supporting normal hormone levels during aging.

DHEA offers many benefits and is most frequently used by elderly consumers and others with deficient hormone levels. It has been on the market as a dietary supplement for the last 20 years and currently has sales of about \$50 million, almost entirely for uses related to aging. DHEA is not like illegal anabolic steroids such as testosterone or precursors such as androstenedione, which have been the targeted for federal and state restrictions over the last two years. Unlike these other substances, DHEA cannot be used by younger, healthy adults to build muscle mass or enhance performance, nor is there evidence that DHEA would product the negative effects commonly associated with steroid abuse

Acting on false information and understandably concerned about the public outrage over the abuse of steroids, Senators Charles Grassley (Iowa), John McCain (Arizona), and Richard Durbin (Illinois) have introduced S. 762, which would nullify the DHEA exemption contained in the Anabolic Steroid Control Act and effectively place DHEA on the Schedule III controlled substances list.

Action

Requested: Oppose S. 762, which would unnecessarily prevent seniors from purchasing a safe, effective dietary supplement.