

# AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS



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## **LEGISLATIVE ALERT!**

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July 23, 2008

The Honorable John D. Dingell  
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dingell:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I am writing in support of H.R. 6357, the "Protecting Records, Optimizing Treatment, and Easing Communication through Healthcare Technology Act of 2008," which promotes health information technology (HIT) adoption and establishes a framework for protecting the privacy and security of patients' personal health information.

HIT makes possible efficiencies and quality improvement efforts that are essential to the broad health reform efforts this committee will undertake in the next Congress. However, adoption of HIT must be done in a manner that adequately addresses privacy and security of personal health information and includes health care workers in the design and implementation. The PRO(TECH)T Act accomplishes that, balancing the promotion of HIT and the possible benefits it will bring to our health system with the assurances patients need to entrust their personal health information with this new system.

We are especially pleased that H.R. 6357 includes consumer and health care worker representatives on the Policy and Standards Committees, which will make recommendations about the adoption of HIT in an open and publicly accountable manner. Guaranteeing the participation of these critical stakeholders will contribute to adoption of HIT in a manner that recognizes the true end users of this needed transformation of our health system: patients and the health care workers that provide them care.

Thank you for your work on this important issue. We look forward to working with you to pass the PRO(TECH)T Act this Congress.

Sincerely,

William Samuel, Director  
DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATION