

**Reform**

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and sold. In shaping the legislation, lawmakers must make sure they don't stifle innovation in this sector.

They can do this by making sure that innovative biotech firms can keep their proprietary research data private for 12 years. Anything short of that would make it next to impossible for biopharmaceutical companies to recoup their upfront costs on these medicines, and would likely mean sacrificing a large number of North Carolina biotech jobs.

Easter Seals has embraced a bill sponsored by Congresswoman Anna Eshoo from California and co-sponsored by N.C. Congressmen, David Price, G.K. Butterfield, Larry Kissell, Heath Shuler and Howard Coble.

The people Easter Seals UCP works with in North Carolina have disabilities such as cerebral palsy, autism, mental retardation, developmental disabilities, acquired injuries, aging-related issues and mental health diagnoses. Medicines produced from biologic products can have a very real and positive effect on the daily lives of these individuals and the degree to which they can manage their disabilities.

The Eshoo bill will create reasonable protections for innovative research being conducted here in North Carolina and will be a major step forward in advancing a health care reform program for our country.

*C.L. Cochran is the president and CEO of Easter Seals UCP North Carolina, Inc. Easter Seals is a nonprofit, community-based health agency dedicated to helping children and adults with disabilities attain greater independence.*

**Committees**

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Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus. "The survey confirms what members have noticed - anecdotally - the lack of African-American staffers on Capitol Hill, particularly in senior positions," said Lee in a statement to the AFRO.

Black aides comprise 10.5 percent or less of the staffs of nine House committees which have



Brady

White chairmen. Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.), chair of what is best-known as the Ethics Committee, has the third highest percentage of Blacks on the committee staff, with six out of 16 aides.

Lofgren took over from Stephanie Tubbs Jones, an African-American who chaired the committee until her death in 2008.

Rep. Robert Brady (D-Pa.), chairman of the House Administration Committee, presides over a staff that is 34.4 percent Black. Brady is one of the few Whites who represent a majority Black district, in Philadelphia, and one of the few White lawmakers with a Black chief of staff.

"I don't ever look at the color of anybody's skin," said Brady according to CQ Online.

Brandon Garrett works in the office of Rep. Marcia Fudge (D-Ohio) and is president of the Congressional Black Associates, an organization of Blacks who work in offices of House members and committees. He said in an e-mail to the AFRO, he has appointed two members, Angela Rye and Bethany Williams, to co-chair an effort to address the issue.

Lee said that she will lead the fight to get more Blacks jobs on committee staffs. She said, "We are aware that there are efforts underway to address this institutionally and the Caucus is committed to lending assistance to the House leadership and committee chairs to ensure a more diverse workforce on Capitol Hill."

**Long-awaited Greensboro Civil Rights Museum to open Feb. 1**

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Grand Opening of The International Civil Rights Center & Museum in Greensboro will coincide with the 50th anniversary of the F.W. Woolworth sit-ins and nonviolent protests that defined a pivotal moment in the civil rights movement," said Melvin "Skip" Alston, chairman of the International Civil Rights Center & Museum. "We are

Four (Ezell Blair, Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeil and David Richmond) and subsequent participants of the F.W. Woolworth sit-ins and nonviolent protests that defined a pivotal moment in the civil rights movement," said Melvin "Skip" Alston, chairman of the International Civil Rights Center & Museum. "We are



Alston

honored to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the sit-in movement with the Museum's grand opening in 2010."

The celebration will begin with the Museum's annual banquet on Jan. 30, 2010. This event is a benefit for the Museum that recognizes international civil and human rights achieve-

ments by community leaders, corporations, organizations and individuals throughout the world. Nido Qubein, chairman of the 2010 gala, will host the Museum's 50th anniversary banquet. Qubein is president of High Point University and is a major philanthropist, author, innovative educator and creative businessman.

The Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting for the Museum will be on Feb. 1,

2010. The 43,000-square-foot facility will feature 14 signature exhibits, a gallery, as well as a Joint Center for the Study of Civil and Human Rights and a children's activity and education center.

For more information about the International Civil Rights Center & Museum's grand opening and schedule of events, please visit [www.sitimovement.org/saveit](http://www.sitimovement.org/saveit) headed.

**"Health care reform will be a government takeover."**  
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