

## **Summary of the “Smallpox Vaccine Compensation and Safety Act of 2003”**

### **Grants to States**

This program would give grants to states to help states meet the costs of the smallpox vaccination program. In order to be eligible for the grants, states must provide adequate education and screening for potential vaccinees. States must also provide voluntary tests for certain conditions that are known contraindications for the smallpox vaccine such as pregnancy, HIV, and eczema. States would also have to ensure that there are medical surveillance and evaluation programs in place to monitor the health of vaccinees.

### **Safer Needles**

This section would require that states provide sheathed, bifurcated needles for use in administering the smallpox vaccine, to the extent that these needles are approved by FDA and available.

### **Health Care for Individuals Suffering an Adverse Reaction or Complication From the Smallpox Vaccine**

This section would require that states provide medically necessary assistance to health care workers or first responders who suffer an adverse reaction or complication from the smallpox vaccine, or to anyone who is injured by coming into contact with someone who has recently been vaccinated. The federal government would bear the full financial responsibility for this program.

### **National Smallpox Vaccine Injury Compensation Program**

This section would create a no-fault compensation program modeled on the existing childhood Vaccine Injury Compensation Program. The purpose of this program is to compensate people injured by the vaccine, or who are injured by coming into contact with someone who has recently been vaccinated, for their unreimbursed medical expenses and lost wages. This program establishes a death benefit in the rare case of death from the vaccine.

### **Protection from Disciplinary Action**

This section would make it unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a worker who chooses not to take the smallpox vaccine.

### **Medical Leave for Certain Vaccine Recipients**

This section would provide up to four days of medical leave for health care workers and first responders who suffer transient but significant reactions to the smallpox vaccine. Employers can be reimbursed by the federal government for the costs of these lost wages.

## **Responsibilities of the Federal Government**

This section would require that there be sufficient stockpiles of vaccinia immune globulin in case of adverse vaccine reactions. It would also require that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) establish a uniform system for reporting adverse reactions to the smallpox vaccine. Finally, it would require that HHS submit a report to Congress on the number of people who have been vaccinated and how many and what kind of adverse reactions there have been to the vaccine.