

# ROBINS, KAPLAN, MILLER & CIRESI

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ROMAN M. SILBERFELD

## VIA FACSIMILE

Hon. Henry A. Waxman  
United States House of Representatives

Dear Representative Waxman:

I understand that you are nominated to receive the 1996 Achievement Award in women's health on June 18, 1996. While this honor is certainly most well deserved by you, given your consistent support of women's health issues, I write to you to express my concern about the sponsorship of the program by Eli Lilly & Company.

As a lawyer, I have represented the victims of Diethylstilbestrol (DES) exposure for over 20 years. In that time, I have personally witnessed the callous disregard of Eli Lilly and other pharmaceutical firms who brought this untested and useless drug to market, sold it for 25 years, and have, for the last 20 years, engaged in a pattern of denial and obstruction of the legitimate claims of their victims.

It is ironic that Eli Lilly would co-sponsor the awards in women's health given the devastating effects which DES has had upon the female population and their female offspring. The drug was first marketed in 1947, after no company testing of any kind. Within five years, the drug was known to be ineffective for the treatment of accidents of pregnancy. Nevertheless, for another 18 years, the drug was sold for use in accidents of pregnancy. Ample research existed long before the drug came to market that drugs such as Diethylstilbestrol, in the class of estrogens, were capable of causing genital tract tumors. Given in pregnancy, the drug attacks the developing genital tract of the female fetus. With a latency period of approximately 20 years for cancer, the drug has been known to cause genital tract cancer in the female offspring of the women who took the drug. Many have died. Others survived only after radical surgery, radiation, the loss of reproductive capability, and the constant fear of recurrent cancer.

Because of Eli Lilly's role in this medical and pharmaceutical tragedy, I would ask you to consider declining the award because of the sponsorship of Eli Lilly. In the alternative, I would ask you to consider some mention of DES in any remarks you would give at the time of the award ceremony.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter.

Sincerely,

ROBINS, KAPLAN, MILLER & CIRESI

Roman M. Silberfeld

RMS/jt  
cc: Pat Cody