

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY



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OFFICE OF THE ASSOCIATE VICE CHANCELLOR FOR RESEARCH

*Handwritten initials/signature*

EDWARD L. MACCORDY

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FOR RESEARCH

To: Robert Blackburn (Washington University)  
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✓ Howard Bremer (WARF) *Handwritten initials*

From: Edward MacCordy *EQ*

Re: Product Liability Exposure of Universities

According to the attached article from Forbes, Senator Kasten is sponsoring a bill to bring some order to the area of product liability litigation. As you know, exposure of universities to such risks threatens the continuation of our technology transfer programs and our ability to freely engage in cooperative research with industry. It is having a significant effect on our willingness to transfer technology to small and intermediate sized firms which are not capable of indemnifying the university against major product liability judgements by the courts. This could become a major concern in the near future as it affects university innovations in the biomedical area, an area served by many small high technology companies.

Is this an opportunity to seek legislative relief in some form, for example immunity of not-for-profit research organizations from product liability suits if their role in product development is limited?

Enclosure

ELM:kgs