

## HGH bill altered in order to help children

Contributed by A.J. Perez, USA TODAY  
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### Senators

Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., and Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, have dropped language in the bill that would have put HGH on the same legal plane as anabolic steroids, a move that would have severely limited access to the synthetic hormone.

### For

example, under the bill's original language, HGH would not have been widely available through the mail and would not have been available in longer than six-month supplies. Because doctors specializing in childhood growth disorders often are far from patients, such controls could have caused hardship for families with children using the drug.

### "We've

ran into some things that we didn't anticipate. We were enlightened by the parents whose children legitimately need HGH," Grassley told USA TODAY on Tuesday. "Making it (a more tightly controlled substance) would have created a lot of red tape for them."

### However,

the new draft of the bill includes language that would prohibit use of HGH "for athletic performance, bodybuilding, or anti-aging" purposes, according to Beth Pellett Levine, a spokeswoman for Grassley. Other than requiring a prescription, there currently is no list of approved or unapproved uses for HGH, which can aid recovery and fuel muscle growth.

### The new

bill also would make possessing HGH for personal use without a prescription a federal crime.

### "We

believe we can solve the families' problems with the bill and still clamp down on improper use of HGH," Schumer said in an e-mail. "The proposal we're working on should be able to do both."

The bill could be brought up for a vote by the Senate in the coming weeks.

A groundswell of opposition to the original version of the bill was created last month when it appeared it was on the verge of unanimous approval in the Senate. Groups such as the Magic Foundation, a non-profit that provides support for families dealing with children with growth disorders, mobilized its members.

"I think the number of calls they received really shocked them," said Mary Andrews, CEO and co-founder of the Magic Foundation.

Some of the those calls came from Tamera Garrett of St. Charles, Ill. She said her 9-year-old daughter, Madison, who was diagnosed with Idiopathic Short Stature (ISS), may not have been eligible to receive HGH if the bill would have passed in its original form.

"Some disorders just aren't recognized, but there's still a need for the medication," Garrett said.

Seven-time Cy Young Award winner Roger Clemens used HGH, according to Major League Baseball's Mitchell Report, which cited information from Clemens' former personal trainer Brian McNamee. In an appearance before a congressional committee, Clemens denied under oath that he used HGH.

New York Yankees pitcher Andy Pettitte admitted using HGH before baseball banned it in 2005.

"They have made our lives harder, whether the bill passes or not," said Ed Champ of Manorville, N.Y., whose son Ryan, 8, has been prescribed HGH the last 5½ years.

"For the last three months, our family and hundreds of other families worried about this bill, all because of the actions of a few select people."