

Do commercial interests detract from important issues in medical research?

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.**

We may owe the nasal flu vaccine in part to an obscure law signed 35 years ago.

Also, the nicotine patch. The HPV vaccine. The once-a-day pill for HIV infection. And thousands more drugs, medical devices, and technological advances.

The Bayh-Dole Act of 1980 aimed to do nothing less than transform scientific research. For the first time, it allowed American universities to own the patents on all discoveries their faculty members had made using federal research grants. Not only that: Universities could cut exclusive deals with private companies to turn those inventions into commercial products in exchange for a cut of the profits.

Backers of the law say it spurred the biotech revolution. They [point to](#) the several thousand startups that have been founded and the scores of new vaccines, drugs, and diagnostic tools that have come to market since Bayh-Dole was enacted. “It’s a landslide of good outcomes,” said Fred Reinhart, the president of a trade group that supports the transfer of technology from university labs to private industry.

But critics find plenty of fault with the law. They say it’s shifted focus away from basic research and towards inventions with commercial potential. Entangled academics in a web of conflicts of interest. [Replaced](#) a spirit of collaboration in academia with secrecy.

**Read full, original post:** [How an obscure law brought us nasal flu spray – and new conflicts of interest](#)