

## Castle's Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act Passes House -- June 7, 2007

Washington, D.C. -- The House of Representatives today overwhelmingly passed the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, co-authored by Delaware Congressman Mike Castle and Rep. Diana DeGette (D-CO). This legislation incorporates both, the content of H.R. 810, which was vetoed by President Bush in July of 2006, as well as language to expand research alternatives.

"It is clear that a majority of the House, just like a majority of Americans, back potentially life-saving stem cell research," Castle stated. "Most importantly, this legislation would establish an ethical construct to oversee stem cell research by ensuring embryos were created solely for the purpose of fertility treatment, were in excess of clinical need, and previous plans had been made to discard them. Prior to the decision to discard the embryo, all other options are open to a couple, including embryo adoption. We also included in the legislation strong protections to ensure no money could exchange hands."

Responding to critics who believe alternative research should be pursued in replacement of embryonic stem cell research, Congressman Castle said, "I encourage all advances in ethical life-saving research. Scientific advancement should not be used as an excuse to abandon other promising science. The vast majority of scientists agree that embryonic stem cell research offers the greatest promise for developing treatments and cures for countless diseases and conditions. We do not know which types of stem cells are going to help us find cures and treatments for the 1 in 3 Americans suffering in this country.

"With this bill, we have a real opportunity to make history -- to jumpstart research which may lead to treatments and cures for countless diseases, including diabetes, HIV/AIDS, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimers, ALS, Multiple Sclerosis and cancer. I urge the President to review the expansion of the bill and reconsider his vow to veto the bill. With another veto, we continue to waste valuable years of promising research.

"We owe it to the millions of Americans suffering throughout the country. It is my hope that in the end we will be able to craft a final piece of legislation that is acceptable to advancing science and at the same time addresses the concerns of the Bush Administration. I am not sure that can happen, but I am committed to seeing if it can."

Summary of S. 5,  
"The Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act":

The Secretary of Health & Human Services shall conduct and support research on stem cells that have been derived from embryos ONLY if the following requirements are met:

- Embryos used to derive stem cells were originally created for fertility treatment purposes and are in excess of clinical need;
- The individuals seeking fertility treatments for whom the embryos were created have determined that the embryos will not be implanted in a woman and will otherwise be discarded;
- The individuals for whom the embryos were created have provided written consent for embryo donation and without receiving financial inducement; and
- New language in the bill would require the HHS Secretary to develop alternative mechanisms to derive stem cells without destroying a human embryo.

The Secretary, in consultation with the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), shall issue guidelines 60 days after enactment. These guidelines shall ensure that federally funded researchers adhere to ethical considerations. The Secretary shall annually report to Congress about NIH funded stem cell research.

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