

## Castle: Human Skin Cells Show Promise for Advancing Stem Cell Research -- November 21, 2007

Washington D.C. -- Delaware Congressman Mike Castle today expressed hope and enthusiasm for recent announcements from researchers believing they can use human skin cells in ways that offer similar promise as embryonic stem cells -- without using actual embryos in the process.

"This recent announcement gives me hope that the scientific community can advance medical research without the political and ethical roadblocks," Castle said. "Scientists are right to alert us that while these medical treatments are not immediately available, the potential to transform adult cells into embryo-like ones is real, and progress is moving steadily in this area. While the ultimate potential remains unclear, I strongly support the development of all ethical forms of medical research to help scientists understand and treat diseases.

"Access to federal funding can enable American scientists to lead the world in medical breakthroughs in this area, as we do in so many other fields of research. My passion for advancing and expanding the federal support for research on stem cells comes from years of meeting with those who suffer from diseases, such as diabetes and Alzheimers, and the family and friends who care about them.

"My judgment is that embryonic stem cell research will move forward with a new president, but if this new potential can trigger increased federal support, then this is great news. This announcement is a very significant step and one that I hope can overcome the ethical debate over the development and use of embryonic stem cells, while advancing medical research for millions of people who suffer."

Rep. Castle has long been a proponent of all forms of stem cell research and was the lead author of embryonic stem cell research legislation to lift federal funding limits to allowing experiments on cells that would otherwise be discarded by fertility clinics. In 2006, President Bush issued his first veto on Rep. Castle's H.R. 810, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act. Earlier this year, the bill was reintroduced by Rep. Castle and Rep. Diana DeGette of Colorado, as H.R. 3.

The Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act would have required the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct and support research that utilizes human embryonic stem cells if the following ethical requirements are met (regardless of the date on which the stem cells were derived from a human embryo):

(1) The stem cells were derived from human embryos that have been donated from in vitro fertilization clinics, were created for the purposes of fertility treatment, and were in excess of the clinical need of the individuals seeking such

treatment.

(2) Prior to the consideration of embryo donation and through consultation with the individuals seeking fertility treatment, it was determined that the embryos would never be implanted in a woman and would otherwise be discarded.

(3) The individuals seeking fertility treatment donated the embryos with written informed consent and without receiving any financial or other inducements to make the donation.

Additionally, the bill sought to require the Secretary to conduct and support basic and applied research to develop techniques for the isolation, derivation, production, or testing of stem cells that, like embryonic stem cells, are capable of producing all or almost all of the cell types of the developing body and may result in improved understanding of or treatments for diseases and other adverse health conditions but are not derived from a human embryo.

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