

CASTLE: PURSUE ALL ETHICAL FORMS OF STEM CELL RESEARCH -- JANUARY 10, 2008

Wilmington, DE-- Congressman Michael N. Castle today responded to an announcement from scientists from Advanced Cell Technology (ACT), the University of California San Francisco, and StemLifeLine about their development of the first five human embryonic stem cell lines without the destruction of embryos, reporting that this technology could be used to increase the number of stem cell lines available to federal researchers immediately. The technology involved removing single cells from the embryos; as reported, the biopsied embryos continued to develop normally and were then frozen.

"I am hopeful that new stem cell lines will bolster the ability of medical researchers to alleviate the suffering of millions," said Congressman Castle. "I am heartened that ACT scientists are advancing this technique and believe the announcement reaffirms that we should be pursuing all avenues of science to increase the number of stem cell lines available to researchers, and as quickly as possible. Many of these lines are presently off limits to federal funding due to an outdated policy that hasn't been updated as science has advanced. The Administration should take this opportunity to review its standard for federal funding of stem cell research."

"One thing remains clear, scientific advancement should not be used as an excuse to abandon other promising science. Continued important discoveries, like this and the human skin cell discovery from November, only underscores the importance of pursuing all avenues of science that show promise for advancing human health.

"Research holds the key to more effective treatments that improves quality of life and overall life expectancy. We only limit our capabilities of advancement when we stifle research. Science would benefit greatly from expanding federal oversight and regulation to all forms of stem cell research.

"My judgement and my great hope is that embryonic stem cell research will move forward with full force under the next administration. In the meantime we should pursue any and all avenues for research that hold such great promise for improving the lives of so many who are suffering without existing treatment or cures.

"My passion for advancing and expanding research on stem cells comes from years of meeting with those who are suffering from diabetes, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and the family and friends who care for them. There is no greater promise for better treatments and potentially cures than there is with a strong federal investment in ethical forms of medical research of all kinds."

Rep. Castle supports advancing all forms of ethical medical research and is the author of legislation in Congress, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, which has passed Congress twice and has been vetoed by the President twice, to allow for funding and oversight of embryonic stem cell research.

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