



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

July 17, 2006
(Senate)

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

H.R. 810 – Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act

(Rep. Castle (R) DE and 200 cosponsors)

The Administration strongly opposes Senate passage of H.R. 810, which would use Federal taxpayer dollars to support and encourage the destruction of human life for research. The bill would compel all American taxpayers to pay for research that relies on the intentional destruction of human embryos for the derivation of stem cells, overturning the President's policy that funds research without promoting such ongoing destruction. If H.R. 810 were presented to the President, he would veto the bill.

The President strongly supports medical research and worked with Congress to dramatically increase resources for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). This Administration is the first to provide Federal funds for human embryonic stem cell research and has done so without encouraging the destruction of human embryos. The President's policy permits the funding of research using embryonic cell lines created prior to August 9, 2001, the date his policy was announced, along with stem cell research using other kinds of cell lines. Scientists can therefore explore the potential applications of such cells, but the Federal government does not offer incentives or encouragement for the destruction of human life.

Over the past five years, more than \$90 million has been devoted to embryonic stem cell research through the NIH. However, this bill would provide Federal funding for the first time for a line of research that involves the intentional destruction of living human embryos for the derivation of their cells. Destroying nascent human life for research raises serious ethical problems, and many millions of Americans consider the practice immoral.

The Administration believes that government has a duty to use the people's money responsibly, both supporting important public purposes and respecting moral boundaries. Every year since 1995, Congress has upheld this balance on a bipartisan basis by prohibiting Federal funds for research in which an embryo is destroyed. The Administration's policy upholds this same principle.

H.R. 810 seeks to replace the Administration's policy with one that uses Federal dollars to offer a prospective incentive for the destruction of human embryos. Embryonic stem cell research is at an early stage of basic science and has never yielded a therapeutic application in humans. While no treatments or cures have been developed from embryonic stem cell research, there are therapies and promising treatments from adult stem cells and other forms of non-embryonic stem cells.

Alternative types of human stem cells – drawn from adults, children, and umbilical-cord blood without doing harm to the donors – have already achieved therapeutic results in thousands of patients with many different diseases. Researchers are now also developing promising new techniques to produce stem cells just as versatile as those derived from human embryos, but not requiring the use of embryos. The Administration believes that the availability of alternative sources of stem cells further counters the case for compelling the American taxpayer to encourage the ongoing destruction of human embryos for research.

Moreover, private sector support and public funding by several States for this line of research, which will add up to several billion dollars in the coming few years, argues against any urgent need for an additional infusion of Federal funds, which would not approach such figures even if completely unrestricted. Whatever one's view of the ethical issues or the state of the research, the future of this field does not require a policy of Federal subsidies offensive to the moral principles of millions of Americans.

H.R. 810 advances the proposition that the Nation must choose between science and ethics. The Administration, however, believes it is possible to advance scientific research without violating ethical principles -- both by enacting the appropriate policy safeguards and by pursuing the appropriate scientific techniques. H.R. 810 is seriously flawed legislation that would undo current safeguards, and provide a disincentive to pursuing new techniques that do not raise ethical concerns.

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