

Stem Cell Research Would Give Hope to Millions

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Americans value compassion, innovation, cutting-edge research, common-sense solutions, and hope for a better life. Many of the most important scientific advancements in healthcare came from federally funded research grants to American scientists. From eradicating polio to completing the first heart transplant, our country, time and again, has shown leadership by pursuing scientific research that can lead to discoveries that save millions of people from suffering and premature death.

No issue has generated as many heartfelt letters, phone calls, and conversations as support for stem cell research. Science shows that stem cells have the potential to transform the lives of millions of Americans suffering from debilitating illnesses and injury. It is estimated that more than 100 million of our fellow citizens may someday be helped by stem cell research, including many of our friends and neighbors here in Charlotte County.

Unfortunately, for a second time the President chose to play politics when he vetoed legislation that would have expanded federally-funded research for embryonic stem cell technology. I was a proud cosponsor of the House bill, which included strict ethical rules requiring the donors' written permission to use embryos for research that would otherwise be discarded by fertility clinics. Simply put, the President is not talking straight when he says that embryonic stem cell research destroys lives. Using the President's logic, why doesn't he stop couples from discarding the embryos they no longer need to conceive a child?

I believe we have a moral responsibility to work to alleviate the suffering of millions of Americans waiting for hope, waiting for a cure, and praying for leadership on this issue. By ignoring the will of the American people, the President is, without a doubt, slowing scientific research that has the potential to cure or treat diseases including diabetes, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's, Lou Gehrig's disease, multiple sclerosis, cancer, and spinal cord injuries.

I believe we need to pursue all types of ethical life-saving science, including alternative forms of stem cell research. I agree with the President that other forms of stem cell research also offer exciting opportunities and they should be federally funded as well. But it is also clear that none of these alternative stem cell technologies are as advanced and offer the potential that embryonic stem cells do.

We need real leadership on this issue and we need it now. We need to stop getting in the way of science and we need to get back into the business of giving hope to the millions of our countrymen who can benefit from this research. I will keep voting to send ethical stem cell research to the President's desk until he or his successor realizes that giving our fellow Americans hope and saving lives is not a political issue.

Congressman Tim Mahoney

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