

(January 11, 2007) House Opens Debate on Embryonic Stem Cell Research, Veto Certain

House Opens Debate on Embryonic Stem Cell Research, Veto Certain

by Steven Ertelt

LifeNews.com Editor

January 11, 2007

Washington, DC (LifeNews.com) -- The House of Representatives opened debate on a bill forcing taxpayers to fund embryonic stem cell research that involves the destruction of human life. Advocates of the bill claimed patients would be hurt without it while pro-life lawmakers said the government should not fund the destruction of human embryos to advance science.

"We on the pro-life side strongly support stem cell research as long as it does not require the killing of human embryos," Rep. Chris Smith, a New Jersey Republican, told his colleagues.

He pointed the House to new research from a team of scientists from Wake Forest University and Harvard Medical School.

Scientists at those institutions "announced the stunning news that they had discovered a new, readily available source of potentially life saving stem cells derived exclusively from amniotic fluid," Smith said.

Those cells, the scientists said, have similar potential as embryonic stem cells.

But, Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee, a Texas Democrat, read off a list of diseases that Americans suffer and said "We owe them hope and hope for the hopeless."

She said new embryonic stem cell research lines are needed because older ones that the federal government have funded aren't effective enough to carry out the necessary research.

"This is the right way to go," she told the House.

Other lawmakers joined Smith in opposing the bill.

"I support stem cell research with only one exception _ research that requires killing human life," Minority Leader John Boehner, an Ohio Republican, said during the debate.

"Taxpayer-funded stem cell research must be carried out in an ethical manner in a way that respects the sanctity of human life," Boehner added. "Fortunately, ethical stem cell alternatives continue to flourish in the scientific community.",

During the debate, backers of the bill bashed President Bush for his policy and siding with pro-life advocates.

"The president has placated the fringe of his party and ... placed lives at risk," Democratic Rep. Frank Pallone of New Jersey said.

Not all Democrats supported the measure.

"I want a cure for diabetes but I don't believe this bill is a way to get there," Rep. Dan Lipinski, an Illinois Democrat who suffers from the disease, told lawmakers.

"I desperately want to be cured of diabetes, but science has demonstrated that we don't have to choose" between science and protecting human life because of adult stem cell research.

The House will likely approve the bill, HR 3, and the Senate is expected to follow suit, President Bush indicated he will veto the measure.

Though advocates of the controversial research, which has never treated any human patients, picked up additional votes after the November elections, they do not likely have the two-thirds vote necessary to override a presidential veto.

Assuming every member of the House votes on the bill, advocates need 290 votes to be able to overturn a presidential veto. Only 238 lawmakers supported the embryonic stem cell research bill last time and that number likely won't increase enough to override the president.

Printed from: <http://www.lifenews.com/bio1950.html>