

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 4, 2004

The Honorable George W. Bush  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to urge you to expand the current federal policy concerning embryonic stem cell research.

As you know, embryonic stem cells have the potential to be used to treat and better understand deadly and disabling diseases and conditions that affect more than 100 million Americans, such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injury, and many others.

Embryonic stem cells can be derived from in vitro fertilized (IVF) embryos that are developed in excess of those needed for the procedure used to enable infertile couples to have children. The IVF process results in more embryos than are needed by the couple. There are estimated to be more than 400,000 IVF embryos, which are currently frozen and will likely be destroyed if not donated, with informed consent of the couple, for research.

We very much appreciate your words of support for the enormous potential of this research, and we know that you intended your policy to help promote this research to its fullest. As you know, the Administration's policy limits federal funding only to embryonic stem cells that were derived by August 9, 2001, the date of the policy announcement.

However, scientists have told us that since the policy went into effect more than two years ago, we have learned that the embryonic stem cell lines eligible for federal funding will not be suitable to effectively promote this research. We therefore feel it is essential to relax the restrictions in the current policy for this research to be fully explored.


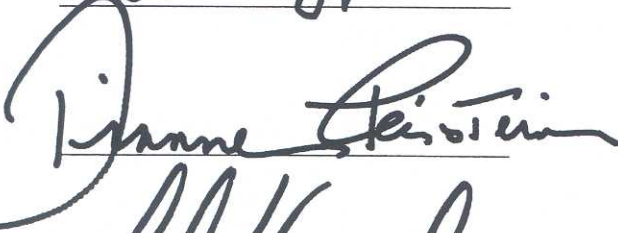
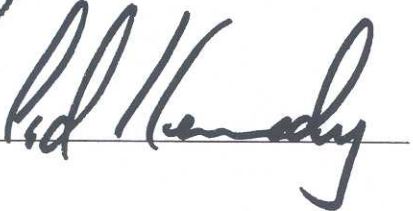




Among the difficult challenges with the current policy are the following:

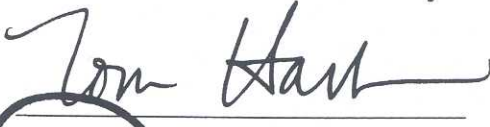
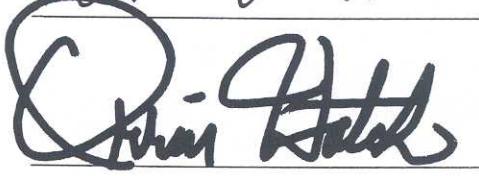


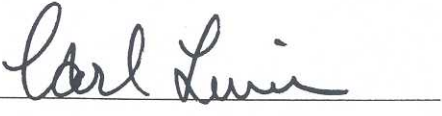
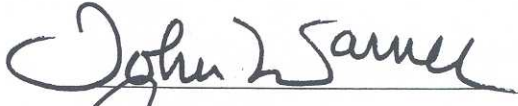
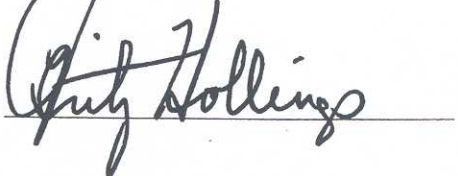
- While it originally appeared that 78 embryonic stem cell lines would be available for research under the federal policy, now, more than two years after August 9, 2001, only 19 are available to researchers.
- All available stem cell lines are contaminated with mouse feeder cells, making their therapeutic use for humans uncertain.

- Scientists are reporting that it is increasingly difficult to attract new scientists to this area of research because of concerns that funding restrictions will keep this research from being successful.
- Despite the fact that U.S. scientists were the first to derive human embryonic stem cells, leadership in this area of research is shifting to other countries such as the United Kingdom, Singapore, South Korea, and Australia.

Mr. President, we know that you have been a strong supporter of medical research and share our commitment to curing disease and alleviating human suffering. We would very much like to work with you to modify the current embryonic stem cell policy so that it provides this area of research the greatest opportunity to lead to the treatments and cures for which we are all hoping.

Sincerely,

John Edwards

Barbara Poyer

Wm. M. ...

John ...

R. W. ...

Frank R. Lautenberg

Herb Kohl

Paul Sarbanes

E. J. Chafee

Bryon L. Dargatzis

Russell B. Feingold

Debbie Stabenow

Daniel K. Akaka

Mamie C. ...

Jeff Bingaman

Tommy ...

Charles Schumer

Mack ...

Jack Reed

Chris ...

Bill Nelson

Tom F. ...

Max Baucus

Wendell ...

King Bailey Hutchins

Jim Johnson

J. Wilson

Robert A. McLaughlin

Bob Crawford

Paul Cochran

Jay Robinson

Lee Stevens

Erin Boyl

Bob Wilson

Harry Reid

Lamar Alexander

Tom Lays

William Young

Robert E. Byrd

John McCain

Blanche L. Lincoln

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Frank Lott

Barbara Stinson Campbell