



FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE

ACTION ALERT

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Oppose Funding of Destructive Embryonic Stem Cell Research! Support Cures We Can All Live With

On March 9, President Obama issued an Executive Order overturning the limits President Bush had placed on government funding of destructive embryonic stem cell research. On April 23, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) published draft guidelines to implement the Obama directive. If these guidelines are approved, federal taxpayer funds will support research on human embryonic stem cells derived by killing human embryos created in fertility clinics through in vitro fertilization. Parents will be able to donate their embryonic children for such research when they feel they no longer need them for reproduction. The guidelines currently do not allow federal funding for research on human embryonic stem cells derived from cloning or parthenogenesis, or from IVF embryos specially created for research purposes. See: www.nchla.org/doc_display.asp?ID=245. *The public has until May 26 to submit comments.*

Cardinal Justin Rigali, chairman of the Catholic bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, called the draft guidelines "a new chapter in divorcing biomedical research from its necessary ethical foundation." Without unconditional respect for human life, he said, experiments on human subjects become "another way for some human beings to use and mistreat others for their own goals." The Cardinal called for "increased support for promising and ethically sound stem cell research and treatments that harm no one." He expressed concern that some in Congress and the Administration want to go beyond the draft guidelines and use embryos specially created for research by in vitro fertilization or cloning. For the Cardinal's full statement, see: www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2009/09-087.shtm. Calling the guidelines "the first step," Reps. Diana DeGette (D-CO) and Michael Castle (R-DE) intend to move forward with broader legislation to "promote all forms of ethical stem cell research," which in their view includes cloning and the creation of embryos solely to destroy them.

For important information, see the USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities' special stem cell page "Oppose Destructive Stem Cell Research" at: www.usccb.org/stemcellcampaign. Also see: www.stemcellresearch.org, and nchla.org/issues.asp?ID=6.

ACTION: Through the NCHLA Grassroots Action Center, please send messages (1) to your two U.S. Senators and Representative opposing the DeGette/Castle legislation, and (2) to the NIH opposing its draft guidelines. Please click here: www.nchla.org/stemcell.

Messages to Congress can also be sent by U.S. Mail, FAX letter, or phone. Call the Capitol switchboard at: 202-224-3121, or call Members' local offices. Full contact info can be found on Members' web sites at www.senate.gov and www.house.gov.

Comments on the NIH guidelines can also be submitted online at: nihoerextra.nih.gov/stem_cells/add.htm or mailed to: NIH Stem Cell Guidelines, MSC 7997, 9000 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20892-7997.

MESSAGE TO CONGRESS: "Do not use my tax dollars to promote destructive embryonic stem cell research or any form of human cloning. Instead please support adult stem cell research, which is ethically sound, harms no one, and is already producing treatments."

MESSAGE TO NIH: "I am opposed to your draft guidelines for embryonic stem cell research, which force me as a taxpayer to subsidize research requiring the destruction of innocent human life. Support should be directed to stem cell research and treatments that harm no one and are already producing good results. In no case should government support be extended to human cloning or other morally reprehensible creation of human embryos for research purposes."

WHEN: NIH must receive comments by May 26. Congress has not yet scheduled action.

4/27/09