

April 2, 2007

**RE: S. 5 (star print) and S. 30 --  
human embryos and stem cell research**

Dear Senator:

On April 10, the Senate will take up S. 5 (star print), introduced by Senator Reid, a bill to mandate federal funding of the type of stem cell research that would require the killing of human embryos. The National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) is strongly opposed to the policy imposed by S. 5 (star print), and will include the roll call(s) on this legislation in our scorecard of key pro-life votes for the 110th Congress.

In addition to the roll call on S. 5, the Senate will vote on a second freestanding proposal, proposed by Senators Coleman and Isakson, the "Hope Offered through Principled and Ethical Stem Cell Research Act" ("HOPE Act") (S. 30). NRLC has no objection to S. 30

S. 5 incorporates the same objectionable provisions that were found in H.R. 810 during the 109th Congress, which was vetoed by President Bush -- a veto sustained by the House on July 19, 2006. In the star print version that Senator Reid introduced on March 29, he added provisions to encourage research into certain alternative forms of stem cell research, but the addition of such unobjectionable provisions in no way lessens our opposition to the core provisions of S. 5.

Each human being begins as a human embryo, male or female. The government should not fund research that requires the killing of living members of the species *homo sapiens*. S. 5 would require federal funding of research projects using stem cells taken from human embryos who are alive today, and who would be killed by the very act of removing their stem cells for the research.

There are many types of stem cell research that are worthwhile and that do not raise ethical objections. Stem cells can be obtained without killing human embryos, from umbilical cord blood and from many types of "adult" (non-embryonic) tissue. Already, humans with at least 72 different diseases and conditions have received therapeutic benefit from treatment with such "adult" stem cells. In contrast, *embryonic stem cells* have not been tested in humans for any purpose because of the dangers demonstrated in animal studies, including frequent formation of tumors.

NATIONAL RIGHT TO LIFE, EMBRYO RESEARCH, PAGE 2

Those who favor federal funding of research that kills human embryos sometimes claim that these embryos “will be discarded anyway,” but this need not be so. Many human embryos have been adopted while they were still embryos, or simply donated by their biological parents to other infertile couples. Today they are children indistinguishable from any others.

Moreover, biotech researchers have made it clear that they will not be satisfied with the cell lines that might be created with donated human embryos produced by in vitro fertilization. They wish to use the somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT) cloning technique, used to create Dolly the sheep and thousands of other mammalian clones, to create countless human embryos for the specific purpose of research. We urge you, during this new Congress, to oppose the creation of human embryos by cloning -- a practice which, if allowed to proceed, will result in what President Bush has appropriately called “human embryo farms.”

Opposition to human cloning would entail opposing S. 812, introduced by Senators Hatch and Feinstein, since this bill would institute a national “clone and kill” policy -- that is, it would authorize the creation of human embryos by cloning, while seeking to ensure the ultimate death of such embryos by prohibiting their implantation. We urge you to support the true ban on human cloning, the Brownback-Landrieu bill, S. 1036.

For additional information on any of these matters, please contact the NRLC Federal Legislation Department at 202-626-8820 or [Legfederal@aol.com](mailto:Legfederal@aol.com). Additional resources are available at the NRLC Human Embryos webpage at [www.nrlc.org/killing\\_embryos/index.html](http://www.nrlc.org/killing_embryos/index.html) and at <http://www.stemcellresearch.org/>

Thank you for your consideration of NRLC’s positions on these important issues

Sincerely,



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