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May 23, 2005

Dear Member of Congress:

We write to reiterate the strong opposition of the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) to H.R. 810, legislation to mandate federal funding of research that requires the killing of human embryos. As noted in our letter of May 11, NRLC will include the roll call on H.R. 810 in our scorecard of key pro-life votes for 2005.

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*. H.R. 810 would require federal funding of research projects on 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 -- a practice very different from that of the human being who dies by accident and whose organs are then donated to others. 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 58 different diseases and conditions have received therapeutic benefit from treatment with such "adult" stem cells. 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.

One ethical source of stem cells is umbilical cord blood. Prior to debating H.R. 810, the House will consider the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act, sponsored by Congressman Chris Smith (H.R. 2520). This bill will establish a new federal program to make stem cells extracted from cord blood available to patients who need them. We encourage you to support this legislation, which will advance stem cell therapies, and without "promot[ing] science which destroys life in order to save life," as President Bush said on May 20 regarding H.R. 810.

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.

For additional information, please contact the NRLC Federal Legislation Department at 202-626-8820 or Legfederal@aol.com. Additional resources are available at the NRLC Human Embryos webpage at www.nrlc.org/killing_embryos/index.html and at <http://www.stemcellresearch.org/>. Thank you for your consideration of our objections to H.R. 810.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of David N. O'Steen in black ink.

David N. O'Steen, Ph.D.
NRLC Executive Director

Handwritten signature of Douglas Johnson in blue ink.

Douglas Johnson
NRLC Legislative Director