



July 13, 2006

Dear Senator:

With the Senate scheduled to vote on H.R. 810 on July 18, we write to express the strong opposition of the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) to this legislation, which would mandate federal funding of research that requires the killing of human embryos. NRLC will include the roll call on passage of H.R. 810 in its scorecard of key pro-life votes for the 109th Congress.

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 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.

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.

Prior to the vote on H.R. 810, the Senate will vote on S. 3504, the Fetus Farming Prohibition Act, and S. 2754, the Alternative Pluripotent Stem Cell Therapies Enhancement Act. We encourage you to support both S. 3504 and S. 2754.

S. 3504 would make it a federal offense for a researcher to use tissue from a human baby who has been gestated in a woman's womb, or an animal womb, for the purpose of providing such tissue. Some researchers have already conducted such "fetus farming" experiments with animals -- for example, by gestating cloned calves to four months and then aborting them to obtain certain tissues for transplantation. This research is obviously being pursued because of its potential application in humans.

S. 2754, the Alternative Pluripotent Stem Cell Therapies Enhancement Act, would require the National Institutes of Health to support research to try to find methods of creating pluripotent stem cells (which are cells that can be turned into many sorts of body tissue) without creating or harming human embryos. The bill does not endorse any particular method, and does not allow funding of any research that would create or harm human embryos.

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/>

Sincerely,



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Douglas Johnson
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