



## Senator Feinstein Urges Senate Leaders to Take up Stem Cell Bill May 25, 2005

*Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today called on the Senate leadership to have a vote on legislation to expand Federal stem cell research.*

*Senator Feinstein joined Senators Arlen Specter (R-Penn.), Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), Gordon H. Smith (R-Ore.) and Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) at a news conference today to push for the Senate to take up and pass legislation to expand Federal stem cell research sponsored by Representatives Mike Castle (R-Del.) and Diana DeGette (D-Colo.) that was approved by the House of Representatives.*

*The legislation would allow federal funding for stem cell research using stem cell lines derived under strict ethical requirements from excess in vitro fertilization embryos, regardless of the date they were derived. President Bush has threatened to veto this legislation.*

*Following is a statement by Senator Feinstein:*

“I am grateful for Representatives Castle and DeGette and their leadership in getting stem cell legislation passed in the House. They’ve shown that Republicans and Democrats working together can in fact do very good things.

Let’s look back to 2001. In 2001 President Bush authorized the release of 78 stem cell lines. The problem is they have all become contaminated with mouse feeder cells. Therefore none of them are useful for treating or curing diseases in humans. Some have said, ‘Why haven’t researchers applied for these stem cell lines?’ The reason is because they are contaminated and they are not viable for human research.

So this is really the first opportunity we have now to see that this kind of research begins in the United States. I join with my colleagues in urging the Majority Leader to bring the House bill to the floor. We should then pass that House bill. We should send it to the President. And we should strongly make the arguments.

South Korea recently announced its advances in human stem cell research. I think that the one thing they show is that the possibility of what stem cell research can accomplish is a large possibility, and it is, in fact, a probability.

California passed Proposition 71 with a dominant majority last November to create a \$3 billion stem cell research center. At least five other states are following.

It should be very clear that a majority of American people want to see this research go ahead. I think the argument has been made that this isn't human life. A decision has already been made to discard the embryos that are eligible for research under this bill. These embryos are never going to become a child.

So I think this is the soundest first step we can take. The fact that it was done in the House, which generally is much more conservative than the Senate on these matters, adds a line of strength that we haven't had in this debate before.

My very simple hope is that it won't be long before this bill will be on the floor of the Senate. And then hopefully, we will be able to go and talk to the President of the United States. And hopefully we will be able to convince him not to veto this bill, because this bill is really in the interest of the people of the United States, particularly the millions who are facing catastrophic and devastating disease."

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