



Feinstein Calls for Senate Vote on Stem Cell Bill Before August Recess

- Feinstein also announces cosponsorship of Hatch cord blood bill -

June 29, 2005

Washington, DC – At a rally of patients, researchers, and advocates today, Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) called on the Senate to take up and approve legislation that would expand the number of embryonic stem cell lines eligible for federal funding before the August recess.

Separately, Senator Feinstein also announced that she would cosponsor legislation sponsored by Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) that would begin a new commitment to develop a national infrastructure for cord blood stem cell collection and research. The bill, which was approved today by the Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions Committee, would:

- Establish a 3-year demonstration project with the Department of Health and Human Services to enter into one-time contracts with qualified cord blood banks in order to create and maintain a national inventory of 150,000 new high quality cord blood units suitable for transplantation into unrelated recipients.
- Establish a transplantation program overseen by the Health and Human Services Secretary that will increase the amount of transplant material, both bone marrow and cord blood, available for use by unrelated patients.
- Require the Secretary to contract for the establishment of a database which will collect and maintain information on outcomes for all patients who have received treatments with stem cell therapeutics products.

Following is Senator Feinstein's statement on the need to pass legislation on stem cell research.

“We are on the cusp of a bright new frontier of medicine. The House of Representatives has passed a bipartisan stem cell bill by a vote of 238 – 194. Now it's time for the Senate to act. We need a stem cell policy that encourages research. A policy that offers hope. A policy that will help find cures.

In the Senate, we have a united bipartisan effort behind just such a policy. I'm asking all of you here today to continue talking to senators and tell them why a sensible embryonic stem cell policy is needed.

The one thing that's made this battle different are the people out there. The one thing that I've seen that has changed a mind is when it becomes personal. So just as you did in the House, I ask you to make this fight up close and personal.

Tell United States Senators about people that you know who might be helped by stem cell research. Tell them about:

- **People who have had their spinal cords severed or for whom science has always said, 'There is no help.'**
- **People whose mother may have Alzheimer's or whose father may have Parkinson's disease.**
- **People who have diabetes.**

All these people can go and spark the difference in a United States Senator.

This is a bill that should pass. This is a bill that should be signed by the President of the United States. What is going to affect that signature is a critical mass of people who rise up and say, 'We need help.' So don't pull your punches. Go out and deliver those stories to the decision makers and to the Chief Executive of our country. This, I think, will make a big difference.

Tell them that the 78 lines that the president initially authorized don't meet researcher's needs.

Tell them that the 22 lines that are eligible for researchers are contaminated with mouse feeder cells, and therefore cannot be used for research in humans.

Tell them that a patchwork of laws exists today, where some states, like my own, California, are funding this research while others are banning it.

Tell them that stem cell research is going ahead full speed in countries like Great Britain, and South Korea and China and other countries – but not in ours.

Tell them that we need to have a vote in the Senate before the August recess.

You prevailed in the House. You can prevail in the Senate. And then the big challenge will come to get the signature of the President of the United States.

So I would only say, 'Go go go, team. This is one we can win.'"

###