

## Vote to Expand Stem Cell Research

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Contact: Kimberly Allen, (202) 226-8364; (202) 420-1524 [cell]

Congressman Rothman Votes to Expand Embryonic Stem Cell Research

By Passing S.5, the House is Sending the Bill Directly to the President's Desk

(Washington, DC)—Today, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) proudly voted to expand scientists' access to embryonic stem cell lines by voting for S.5, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act. This legislation would lift restrictions on embryonic stem cell lines that can be used for federally-funded research — restrictions that were imposed by President Bush in 2001. The House passed the bill this afternoon by a strong bipartisan vote of 247 to 176.

"With today's vote, Congress will send a stem cell research bill straight to the President's desk. President Bush should sign it into law," said Rothman. "The overwhelming majority of scientists agree that embryonic stem cell research holds the most promise for those seeking cures to devastating and debilitating diseases such as Parkinson's, juvenile diabetes, and cancers. Equally as important, this research can be conducted within strict ethical guidelines, as laid out in the Stem Cell Research and Enhancement Act."

S.5 only authorizes federal research funds for stem cell lines generated from embryos that would otherwise be discarded by fertility clinics. The bill also creates an ethical framework that must be followed in conducting this research under the guidance of the National Institutes of Health. For instance, individuals donating cells to fertility clinics must give written informed consent, and cannot receive any financial or other incentive to make the donation.

Earlier this year, the House had passed a similar bill (H.R. 3) as part of the First 100 Hours Agenda. The Senate then passed S. 5 in April by a vote of 63 to 34 — with 44 Democrats, 17 Republicans, and 2 Independents voting "yes". By supporting the Senate-passed S. 5 today, the House sends the bill directly to the President's desk.

This stem cell research bill also passed in the 109th Congress, but was vetoed by President Bush in July 2006. Rothman, a long-time supporter of ethical stem cell research, sees today's action as an opportunity for Bush, saying: "The President has been given a second chance to sign this bill to expand life-saving research, which more than 70% of Americans support. No one is asking Bush to champion embryonic stem cell research — we simply want him to stop standing in the way of the will of the people. This critical legislation will become law — it's just a question of when. I implore him to do the right thing and sign S.5."

The Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act is supported by more than 500 organizations, including the American Medical Association, AARP, Association of American Medical Colleges, and Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, as well as many faith-based groups.

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