ISSCR

International Society for Stem Cell Research

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March 4, 2005

The Honorable Michael Castle
The Honorable Diana DeGette
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Castle and DeGette:

The International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR) strongly supports your legislation, HR 810, The Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, expanding federal support for human stem cell research. ISSCR is the primary international organization of scientific, ethical and clinical researchers in the field of stem cell biology. ISSCR is dedicated to fostering beneficial scientific and medical research using stem cells with the goal of understanding and treating deadly human diseases. Our members study stem cells of all types including stem cells from human adult tissue and from human embryos and germ cells.

More than three years have passed since President Bush articulated the current federal policy in this area in a nationally televised statement in August 2001. Since then, we have learned much more about the potential of research on human stem cells to open vistas of scientific research for future therapies and cures that could save millions of lives at risk today from diseases and medical conditions including Alzheimer's disease, cancer, juvenile diabetes, Parkinson's, traumatic brain injury and spinal cord injuries. We have also learned that the limitations placed by the existing federal policy are consigning U.S. medical research to the sidelines even as other nations are hurrying to develop this field. As you know, American scientists report that it is increasingly difficult to not only attract new scientists but also to retain current scientists in the field of stem cell research out of concern that federal restrictions will keep this crucial research from continuing.

Your legislation would allow broader federal funding for stem cell research under strict ethical guidelines.

The ISSCR Board of Directors salute your leadership. We thank you for your dedicated efforts to preserve the promise of medical research for all Americans.

Sincerely,

Leonard I. Zon, M.D.
President
ISSCR Board of Directors

Larry Goldstein, M.D.
Chair
ISSCR Government Affairs Committee

The International Society for Stem Cell Research is an independent, nonprofit organization established to promote and foster the exchange and dissemination of information and ideas relating to stem cells, to encourage the general field of research involving stem cells and to promote professional and public education in all areas of stem cell research and applications.