

In Support of Stem Cell Research: "We Must Not Give Up."

On Wednesday, July 19, Congressman Rothman voted to override President Bush's veto of legislation to increase

federal funding for ethical stem cell research. Rep. Rothman's statement in the Congressional Record follows:

"Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 810, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act and in support of overturning the President's veto of this legislation. Unfortunately, what should be a debate about promising new research and technology that could lead to cures and treatments for countless diseases and disorders has been overshadowed, yet again, by a debate about when life begins.

"These stem cells do not come from fetuses as some people mistakenly believe. They are blastocysts, 3 to 5 day old embryos made up of so small a number of cells they can fit on a head of a pin. This legislation does not allow these embryos to be cloned or created for stem cell research. Therefore, there is no risk of rogue scientists performing illegal or unethical experiments.

"In addition, the authors of H.R. 810 have taken all precautions to ensure that safeguards are in place for the ethical use of embryonic stem cells. The only embryos permitted to be used under H.R. 810 are those that will come from In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) donors, who no longer plan on using the embryos and who provide their written consent.

"Every year hundreds of thousands of leftover embryos from IVF are thrown away. Instead of tossing them in the trash, why shouldn't the owners of the embryos be able to give their consent to have these embryos used for research? We should not be denying their right to help save lives.

"Those of us who support embryonic stem cell research unfortunately will not be able to overturn the President's veto. We, however, must not give up. To all Americans who support saving lives, who want to cure diseases and disorders that are plaguing their loved ones, and who care about groundbreaking ethical health research, I ask you to take this issue to your elected representative and tell them that you demand this legislation become law in the next Congress."

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