



Statement of Senator Feinstein in Support of Legislation to Expand Stem Cell Research Lines

February 16, 2005

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today joined with Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Arlen Specter (R-Pa.), Sens. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), Orrin Hatch (R-Ut), and Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) to introduce legislation designed to expand the current federal funding policy for stem cell research. The following is Senator Feinstein's statement:

“I think it is critical that we move ahead to begin to enact federal guidelines on stem cell research. There are two bills that will do it: First, there is the bill that is being introduced today, which would make more viable stem cell lines available for federally-funded research. And second -- a bill that we will introduce when we get back from recess -- that would ban human cloning, but allow specialized stem cell research called Somatic Cell Nuclear Transplantation to continue under strict federal oversight. This will be introduced by Senators Hatch, Kennedy, Specter, Harkin and me.

If the federal government doesn't act, we're going to have a patchwork of state laws – and that's already happening. Here's what states are doing:

- California, for instance, is launching a \$3 billion initiative to fund cutting edge stem cell research.
- In 2004, New Jersey created a \$25 million embryonic stem cell research center. Now, acting Governor Richard Codey plans to introduce a \$500 million bond measure to fund embryonic stem cell research over 10 years.
- In Wisconsin, Governor Jim Doyle has proposed investing \$750 million to support embryonic stem cell research and other medical research.
- In Connecticut, legislators have reintroduced a bill that would appropriate \$10 million per year over two years for a stem cell research fund.
- In New York, legislative leaders have has proposed a \$1 billion stem cell bond measure.

The fact that cutting edge research is continuing shows the great promise and potential for profit from embryonic stem cell research. But what it also says to me is that there is a void that still needs to be filled -- and which can only be filled by the federal government.

We need an effective stem cell policy both to provide federal funding for viable stem cell lines and to provide federal ethical guidelines. This, I think, is a major shortcoming of current federal law, which I think should be remedied as soon as possible.”

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