



April 9, 2007

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

On behalf of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), we urge your support for S. 5, which would expand the current federal policy to permit researchers to gain greater access to new embryonic stem cell lines, when the Senate once again debates the subject of human embryonic stem cell research.

The scientific consensus is that embryonic stem cell research is an extremely promising field of research that may lead to the development of more effective treatments for devastating conditions like diabetes, spinal cord injuries, and Parkinson's disease.

Last year AAAS testified before the Senate Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee on emerging techniques proposed as alternatives to human embryonic stem cells. These new approaches are still in the early stages of development and are already eligible for NIH funding, thus S. 30 is not a substitute for S. 5. AAAS strongly believes that it is only through federal support of diverse avenues of stem cell research that we may better understand the potential value and limitations of each approach, and S. 5 is the best bill to help scientists achieve this goal.

AAAS, the world's largest multi-disciplinary science society, representing the interests of ten million scientists worldwide, and publisher of the prestigious peer-reviewed journal *Science*, has a longstanding interest and expertise in stem cell research. We issued recommendations in 1999 for the ethical conduct of stem cell science and continue to work to provide resources to Congress, scientists, and the public on this important topic.

AAAS stands ready to work with you and the U.S. Congress in addressing this complex subject. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Alan I. Leshner