



July 14, 2006

The Honorable Bill Frist, M.D.
Senate Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Frist:

In the coming days, the U.S. Senate will address the scientifically promising subject of human embryonic stem cell research. On behalf of AAAS, the largest multidisciplinary science society in the world and the publisher of the prestigious peer-reviewed journal *Science*, we would like to thank you for your leadership and support for the opportunity presented by the bill passed by the House of Representatives (H.R. 810/S. 471) that would expand the current federal policy to permit researchers to gain greater access to new embryonic stem cell lines.

In August 2001, the AAAS Board of Directors issued a statement advocating that policymakers reassess the Administration's policy periodically "so that changes may be made in order to realize to the fullest extent possible the benefits of this promising field of research." That time is now before us.

AAAS recently 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 early stages of development and are already eligible for NIH funding, thus S. 2754 is not a substitute to H.R. 810. Though intriguing, we do not yet know what their ultimate utility may be, or the ethical challenges they may raise. Furthermore, the most effective results from stem cell research may build upon synergies among discoveries made from different types of stem cells.

AAAS believes that we need to ensure that the full range of approaches is studied, specifically including expansion of federally funded research with human embryonic stem cells. We owe it to all those who may be helped by such research in the future to pursue all avenues of potential treatments and cures for serious diseases.

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 us at 202/326-6639.

Sincerely,

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