



March 16, 2005

The Honorable Tom Harkin
United States Senate
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Arlen Specter
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Harkin and Specter:

On behalf of AAAS, the largest general science society in the world, I would like to express appreciation for your consistent leadership and support of scientific research, including your efforts on behalf of research involving embryonic stem cells. We support your recommendation to the President to expand current federal policy to enable researchers to gain greater access to new stem cell lines.

Federal funding for all types of stem cell research is essential so that the scientific community can better understand the potential value and limitations of each type and so that all avenues of research can be pursued in search of cures for serious diseases. As scientists, we share the President's concern that stem cell research proceed in an ethical manner that engenders public confidence.

AAAS explored these matters in our report, *Stem Cell Research and Applications: Monitoring the Frontiers of Biomedical Research* (www.aaas.org/spp/sfrl/projects/stem/main.htm). As the report states the commitment of federal funds “offers a basis for public review, approval, and monitoring through well established oversight mechanisms that will promote the public’s interest in ensuring that stem cell research is conducted in a way that is both scientifically rigorous and ethically proper.”

Founded in 1848, AAAS has worked continuously to advance science for human well-being. The Association and its journal, *Science*, report nearly 130,000 individual and institutional subscribers, plus 265 affiliated organizations in more than 130 countries, serving a total of 10 million individuals.

Sincerely,

Alan I. Leshner