

Contact: Carrie D. Wolinetz, PhD
(301) 634-7650
cwolinetz@faseb.org

“OUR NATION MUST SUPPORT” EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH FASEB APPLAUDS SENATE FOR PASSING BILL, URGES PRESIDENT NOT TO VETO

Bethesda, MD – “It is time the President responded to the suffering of millions of patients and acknowledged the therapeutic hope embodied by embryonic stem cell research,” said Leo T. Furcht, M.D., President of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB). “Today’s second overwhelmingly bipartisan vote in the Senate, following the second passage of the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act by the House, sends a clear message that the American people are ready to ease the illogical and politically motivated restrictions on scientists.”

FASEB lauded the Senate for passing the bill. “While we cannot thank enough the stalwart champions in the Senate for stem cell research, Senators Harkin, Specter, Hatch, Feinstein, and Kennedy, it is extremely gratifying to have so many of their colleagues join them in voting in support of this critical area of science,” stated Furcht. “It speaks to the deeply personal impact the potential of embryonic stem cell research has on individuals who consider it. When confronted with the overpowering scientific and medical evidence of the significance of stem cell research, as well as the hope it provides to those afflicted with terrible conditions, it becomes clear this is something our nation must support.”

Regarding the possible value of pluripotent ‘alternatives’ to embryonic stem cells, Furcht cautioned against calling these new technologies acceptable substitutes, stating that the science is young and has not yet been fully proven nor vetted by the research community. “It is as if a car company announced a prototype for a biofuel car and members of Congress introduced a bill that would forbid anyone from buying a car with any other kind of engine. You cannot freeze an existing, successful technology at a point of time on the expectation that an unproven technology will replace it,” Furcht explained. “While it is important to pursue all promising avenues of stem cell research, limiting the number of federally funded embryonic stem cell lines only serves to delay scientific breakthroughs that could prove important in treating diseases like diabetes, Parkinson’s disease, or ALS.”

FASEB has turned its attention to [urging](#) the President to sign the bill into law. “It is incomprehensible that protection of embryos whose fate is to be discarded as medical waste is being weighed against chaining the hands of scientists and dousing the hope of millions of Americans,” said Furcht. “The time for the President to act in the best interest of the nation and expand the current embryonic stem cell policy is long overdue.”

FASEB is composed of 21 societies with more than 80,000 members, making it the largest coalition of biomedical research associations in the United States. FASEB enhances the ability of biomedical and life scientists to improve—through their research—the health, well-being and productivity of all people. FASEB’s mission is to advance biological science through collaborative advocacy for research policies that promote scientific progress and education and lead to improvements in human health.