

STEM CELL RESEARCH

(Mr. DELAY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, today on the floor of the House, we will momentarily suspend the annual spring appropriations debates to provide a vital and noble service to the American people. We will consider two bills that transcend both party and politics and oblige us to engage in a moral and metaphysical inquiry into the very nature of man.

If it sounds a little more sobering and important than the regular goings on around here, well, we can only hope, Mr. Speaker.

The first bill to be considered under suspension of the rules, and sponsored by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), would, for the first time, direct Federal funding for research on the stem cells found in umbilical cords of newborn children.

Well-developed cord-blood stem cells, unlike stem cells obtained via the destruction of human embryos, have proven valuable in the treatment of disease, 67 of them to be precise, including leukemia and sickle cell anemia. The Smith bill will direct funds for improved research and therapies using these proven cord-blood cells while expanding the existing Federal bone marrow stem cell research program as well. It will pass with bipartisan support because none of its provisions predicate its available funding upon the destruction of human life.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, of the second bill on the calendar today, sponsored by the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE), the same cannot be said. The Castle bill is both divisive and, to put it bluntly, dismissive of the dignity of human life at its embryonic stage. It has, therefore, incited loud, and in too many cases, harsh, advocacy on both sides of the debate.

But even in the midst of vocal unrelenting support for and opposition to the Castle bill, we must recognize that this is one of those issues that has no easy answers. Proponents of the Castle bill, try as they might to find wiggle room, will vote to fund with taxpayer dollars the dismemberment of living distinct human beings for the purposes of medical experimentation. And those who oppose the bill, as I do, will do nothing less than to block Federal funding for what could, in theory at least, represent a potential advance in scientific inquiry.

Given the lack of nuance of our political and media culture, Congress is unfortunately facing a perceived choice between supporting on the one hand children unlucky enough to be born with debilitating diseases, and on the other, children unlucky enough to be unwanted by the clinic customers who had them created in the first place.

Talk show rhetoric notwithstanding, Mr. Speaker, there are no easy choices. This is not a debate between science

and ideology, as some would have us believe, nor is it a debate between those who care about human life and those who do not. No one in this body is unmoved by the plight of diseased victims. We have friends and family members among them. Nor is anyone insensitive to the ethical ramifications of a medical practice that purports to save some lives by destroying others. But, after all, that is why we were elected: not to make the easy choices, but to make the hard ones.

We will argue one of those choices today, and I urge everyone on both sides of the issues to do so with vigor and with respect. Our decision today, quite literally a matter of life and death, is a necessary and important step in our national conversation about the kind of people we will be in a world of ever more promising and ever more unnerving medical technologies. Lives will be changed, and perhaps ended, because of the path that we choose today.

Today's debate will be our privilege to conduct and witness, Mr. Speaker, and I have every confidence all sides will do so with the respect and compassion this issue deserves.

SPACE ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE DEVOTED TO PEACE

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, this week I will offer an amendment to the defense authorization bill, cosponsored by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY), the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), and the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), which will reaffirm the policy of the National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958, signed into law by President Eisenhower, that it is the policy of the United States that activities in space should be devoted to peaceful purposes for the benefit of all mankind.

This amendment will reaffirm that it is U.S. policy to preserve peace in space by not deploying space-based weapons. Today's New York Times states: "Congress and the administration need to assess whether a multilateral treaty to ban space weapons might not leave the Nation far safer than a unilateral drive to put the first weapons in space."

Please support my amendment, cosponsored by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY), the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), and the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) to keep space devoted to peaceful purposes for the benefit of all mankind; and support H.R. 2420, now cosponsored by 28 Members of the House, which sets the stage for a multilateral treaty to keep space devoted to peaceful purposes.

HEALTH INSURANCE PATIENT OWNERSHIP PLAN

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, as a third-generation physician, I have seen our health care system drive patients and doctors further and further apart. The problem with our current system is that patients are prevented from having immediate control and ownership over critical health care decisions.

Right now, employers or the government determine which health benefits are included in an insurance policy, and it may not be what the patient needs or wants. When patients voice their concerns, insurance companies respond with a deaf ear because the patient cannot change the policy. They are excluded from that decision.

Nearly nine out of ten companies with fewer than 200 employees offer only one health plan. What this means is that the person most affected by the health care, the patient, has little or no input into the type of coverage they have. Patients should be able to control their health care.

Mr. Speaker, we should think about health care in a way that gives patients the power to select who takes care of them and where, that puts health care choices back in the hands of patients.

Defined contribution plans do this, and they are the hallmark of H. Res. 215, the Health Insurance Patient Ownership Plan. I ask my colleagues for their support on this new initiative.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

(Mrs. MALONEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, the President wants to create a culture of life. Stem cell research offers scientists the opportunity to extend life and the quality of life for current and future generations of Americans. In fact, stem cell research offers mankind continued insight into life itself.

Who among us has not had a loved one look at us through the vacant eyes of Alzheimer's, tremble with Parkinson's as they reached for a glass of water, or watched a child inject themselves daily with insulin? How many more lives must be ended or ravaged? How much more unimaginable suffering must be endured until government gives researchers the wherewithal to simply do their jobs?

With all speed, this body must pass the Castle-DeGette Stem Cell Enhancement Research Act. Life is too precious to wait any longer.

STEM CELL THERAPEUTIC AND RESEARCH ACT

(Mr. RYUN of Kansas asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RYUN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, the goal of stem cell research should be to help our fellow human beings. The debate on this issue has, unfortunately, moved into dangerous unethical territory when perfectly moral alternatives exist.

Rather than debating about unethical methods of research, effective, principled alternatives should be sought out that successfully treat patients and offer potential channels for further treatment and research. There are countless opportunities besides embryonic stem cell research that have proven successful.

Adult stem cells have shown great potential and have effectively helped patients. Another alternative is cord-blood stem cells. These are a neglected resource that could be used to treat a diverse body of people. Evidence has demonstrated that cord-blood stem cells have treated a variety of problems, such as spinal cord injuries and neurological diseases.

By supporting H.R. 2520 later today, progress can be made in finding solutions to many medical questions we have to face. H.R. 2520 provides an ethical solution to this issue, and I encourage my colleagues to support it.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

(Mrs. CAPPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, today the House can vote to give millions of Americans suffering from diseases new hope. Patients, doctors, and scientists are desperately awaiting the potential that stem cell research has for treating diseases like Alzheimer's, ALS, cancer, heart diseases, diabetes, spinal cord injuries, and so many others.

My State of California is already on the way. Californians overwhelmingly support this research and decided not to tie the hands of our scientists, not to block the promising new opportunities that stem cell research affords.

Now our Congress has the opportunity to follow suit. This is the kind of research we wanted when we created the National Institutes of Health. Federally funded research ensures that the public benefits and that the research is ethically conducted.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 810.

YOUNGER GENERATION IMPORTANT IN DISCUSSIONS OF SOCIAL SECURITY

(Mr. CONAWAY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, during the month of May, many parents and grandparents, as myself, will begin to celebrate college graduations and high

school graduations of the next generation of workers in this country. This is the group that we should be engaging in the debate on Social Security reform. This is the group that stands the most risk if the current system cannot sustain itself.

I encourage my colleagues to engage this group of individuals as we begin this debate, to help them understand how important it is that we put back the security in Social Security for this generation, and that we help them understand the role that a safety net of Social Security has within an overall retirement package.

So I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to begin this debate with these newly fresh-minted graduates as they take their place in exciting new careers and as they conduct their lives and help us with Social Security.

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URGING SUPPORT FOR H.R. 810, STEM CELL RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005

(Mr. BASS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BASS. Mr. Speaker, today we will take up H.R. 810, the stem cell research bill; and I agree with the distinguished majority leader. The debate that we have today will be about life and death. It will be about the lives of many millions of children who have diabetes, who want to live a fulfilling life and have hope for finding cures at some point in the future, about those who are paralyzed, about those who have congenital heart problems, about those who suffer from cancer and Alzheimer's and other diseases, debilitating diseases.

We need to give the scientific community an opportunity to address these important issues and to do so in such a fashion that is ethical, that has adequate government oversight, that does not allow other countries around the world to take over. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, H.R. 810, with its 200 cosponsors, will pass today because America wants to find cures for these diseases and not leave it to other countries around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues in the House to support H.R. 810.

STEM CELL RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005

(Mr. CLEAVER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, as Americans, we continually strive toward progress. Today we find at our disposal a tool for healing that is unlike any the world has previously known, a tool with the potential to cure our most terrible diseases and ease the suffering of over a half million Americans in my State alone.

Our Nation is blessed with the greatest minds and resources on the planet. My district, Missouri five, there are two citizens, Jim and Virginia Stowers, who have dedicated their personal fortune of nearly \$2 billion to conduct basic biomedical research and fight these diseases. The Stowers Institute employs brilliant researchers from more than 20 countries to use these tools to bridge the gap between diseases and cures.

Across the United States, Americans are voicing their support for stem cell research. Poll after poll shows that Americans, regardless of political affiliation or religion, support using stem cell research as a tool to fight diseases. As a fourth generation ordained minister, I am delighted to be able to support H.R. 810 to ease the suffering.

PROTECT ZARA AND THE SNOWFLAKES

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I am a big supporter of stem cell research. But I do not support the dissecting and destruction of living human embryos to do so.

Steve Johnson from Reading, Pennsylvania, agrees with me. A bicycle incident, an accident, he had 11 years ago replaced his bike with a wheelchair. He has heard that embryonic stem cells might help him walk again. For Steve, though, that is unacceptable, using embryos. The way that H.R. 810 would find those cells is through the destruction of IVF living embryos. He and his wife, Kate, adopted his daughter, Zara, as an embryo from an IVF clinic when she was just a frozen embryo. And H.R. 810 would have killed Zara as an embryo for her stem cells.

There are 20 others like this child here in town today—the “snowflakes”—babies who developed from embryos given by their biological parents to a couple unable to conceive on their own. If H.R. 810 were law, there is a good chance they would not be here at all. They are living human embryos, and there are many of them that should be adopted, not dissected.

The sad thing is that Steve is more likely to be treated not with embryonic stem cell research but with stem cells from his own body. Adult stem cell treatments are helping people walk today, in 67 different diseases and treatments. The proponents of H.R. 810 can produce no such results. There are none for embryonic stem cells.

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 810, STEM CELL RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005

(Mr. HOLT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)