106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 414

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives supporting Federal funding directed toward human pluripotent stem cell research to further research into Parkinson's disease and other medical conditions.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 2, 2000

Mrs. MALONEY of New York (for herself and Mrs. MORELLA) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce

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RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives supporting Federal funding directed toward human pluripotent stem cell research to further research into Parkinson's disease and other medical conditions.

Whereas Parkinson's disease is a relentlessly progressive degenerative disease which kills a specialized and vital type of brain cell, a brain cell which produces a substance, dopamine, that is essential for normal movement and balance;

Whereas the loss of these dopamine-producing cells causes symptoms, including slowness and paucity of movement, tremor, stiffness, and difficulty walking and balancing, rendering the afflicted person incapable of carrying out the normal activities of daily living;

Whereas in 30 percent of Parkinson's disease patients, a dementia occurs that is similar to Alzheimer's disease;

Whereas Parkinson's disease worsens over time, inflicting a horrific physical, emotional, and financial burden on the patient and family, requiring a caregiver to assist in the activities of daily living, and may eventually lead to placement in a nursing home until death;

Whereas Parkinson's disease affects one million Americans—one percent of the population over age 60 and two percent of the population over age 70;

Whereas 50,000 Americans are diagnosed with Parkinson's disease each year—six Americans per hour;

Whereas for each American with Parkinson's disease who is diagnosed, there are two who have Parkinson's disease but are not diagnosed—two million Americans with Parkinson's disease who are undiagnosed—two percent of the population over age 60 and four percent of the population over age 70;

Whereas Parkinson's disease costs the Federal Government approximately $10 billion each year in medicare, medicaid, hospital, and nursing home outlays;

Whereas on average, medications, doctor visits, physical therapy, and hospital stays cost each patient $5,000 per year;

Whereas as a society, we spend $15 billion a year on Parkinson's disease—without considering the indirect costs of lost income, missed opportunities, and family disruptions;

Whereas those $15 billion result in treatments that bring only temporary relief—allowing patients to live longer only to develop the more disabling and untreatable Alzheimer's-like dementia;

Whereas the ability to generate specialized cells, such as the dopamine-producing cells that are lost in Parkinson's disease, will allow us to learn how to generate the specialized cells that are lost in other crippling, devastating, and heretofore untreatable conditions of the nervous system, such as Alzheimer's disease, brain injury, birth defects, spinal cord injury, stroke, muscular dystrophy, and Lou Gehrig's disease;

Whereas the ability to generate specialized cells that are lost in diseases of the nervous system will also allow us to learn how to generate the specialized cells that are lost in such devastating disorders as heart disease, lung disease, kidney disease, liver disease, diabetes, AIDS, sickle-cell anemia, and arthritis;

Whereas this research will be carried out with human pluripotent stem cells, primitive cells that are the forerunners of the specialized cells that are lost in many of the currently incurable diseases;

Whereas stem cells, unlike the specialized cells they replace, can be refitted, reprogrammed, and rearranged to reproduce lost function;

Whereas human pluripotent stem cell research may solve the problem of graft rejection (that is, the body's reaction against foreign tissue), resulting in dramatic improvements in the treatment of a number of life-threatening conditions, such as burns and kidney failure, for which transplantation is currently used;

Whereas human pluripotent stem cell research may provide safer and more effective ways to test drugs without experimenting on humans or animals;

Whereas Federal funds are crucial to allow scientists to proceed with stem cell research and to exploit fully this novel, innovative, and ground-breaking technology; and

Whereas according to the Department of Health and Human Services, research utilizing human pluripotent stem cells does not violate the ban on Federal funding of human embryo research in section 511 of the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1999 (as contained in section 101(f) of division A of Public Law 105–277) (112 Stat. 2681–386), because such stem cells are not embryos: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives supports Federal funding directed toward human pluripotent stem cell research to further research into Parkinson's disease and other medical conditions.

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