Smith Urges Swift Passage of Stem Cell Research Legislation

by Bend Weekly News Sources

As a leader in the fight to expand stem cell research, Senator Gordon H. Smith (R-OR) called on the 110th Congress to swiftly pass legislation to expand the number of stem cell lines eligible for federally funded research. Senator Smith is an original co-sponsor of the measure, which was introduced recently in the United States Senate.

â€œThe start of another Congress affords us the opportunity to re-evaluate stem cell legislation outside of the political cloud of an election year,â€• said Senator Smith. â€œI urge my colleagues, both new and returning, to take a fresh look at the stem cell debate and consider the remarkable potential of this research to cure the most dreadful diseases and save human lives.

â€œA true â€œethic of lifeâ€• includes caring for the living. It is with this conviction that I call on our new leadership to exercise haste in bringing this legislation to the floor and ask my colleagues to place an affirmative vote for hope, healing and human life.â€•

Under the current federal policy on human embryonic stem cell research, only stem cell lines derived before August 9, 2001, are eligible for federally funded research. The legislation lifts the current restriction, allowing stem cell lines derived from excess embryos donated by in vitro fertilization facilities to be eligible for federally funded research regardless of the date on which they were derived. The bill also institutes ethical requirements on stem cell lines that are eligible for federally funded research.

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