

## Senator Smith votes in favor of stem cell research expansion

by Bend\_Weekly\_News\_Sources

“Unshackle the hands of our scientists”, the senator said

As a leader in the fight to expand stem cell research, Senator Gordon H. Smith (R-OR) lauded the passage of S.5, The Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2007, in the U.S. Senate today. The legislation would expand the number of stem cell lines eligible for federally funded research. Senator Smith is an original co-sponsor of the measure. “Current policy regarding stem cell research is limiting our scientists from uncovering the full potential of these cells” one that includes solving some of the most perplexing medical mysteries of today. Those suffering from Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s and numerous other disabling diseases and chronic conditions are depending upon the ingenuity of American science to find them a cure. Yet, without the use of embryonic stem cells, the federal government is forcing our brightest medical minds to operate with one hand tied behind their back.

“We need to unshackle the hands of our scientists and restore hope to the millions of Americans in desperate need of a cure with the implementation of this bill,” added Smith. 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 patients at 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.

Since 2000, Senator Smith has worked on legislation to allow federal dollars to be used to support stem cell research. As a pro-life Senator, Smith has been key to gathering support for HR 810, The Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2005, which passed both the House and the Senate last year and S.5, The Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2007, which passed today.

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