



## Senator Feinstein Renews Call to Expand Stem Cell Research January 26, 2005

**Washington, DC** – Citing a report that the human embryonic stem cell lines approved for federal funding by President Bush are seriously tainted, U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today urged expansion of the number of available lines coupled with national standards for stem cell research.

**“The dividends from stem cell research can be enormous,”** Senator Feinstein said. **“There is probably no field of medicine more exciting, more challenging or more promising. This research can lead to cures of diseases which are catastrophic for humans today. The time has come for us to take up this issue.”**

All of the embryonic stem cell lines currently eligible for federal funding by the President are contaminated with a foreign molecule from mice that may make them risky for use in medical therapies, according researchers at UC San Diego and the Salk Institute for Biological Studies at La Jolla.

If it is even possible, it could take up to two years to find a way to clean the mouse molecules from the existing stem cells and the safest course of action would be to create fresh stem cells free of contamination, according to the researchers.

In the last Congress, Senator Feinstein introduced legislation with Senators Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), Arlen Specter (R-Penn.), Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.), and Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) to prohibit human cloning while allowing stem cell research to move forward with strong federal oversight. The bill:

- Prohibits human cloning with both strong criminal and civil penalties;
- Provides for federal oversight and federal regulation of somatic cell nuclear transplantation research; and
- Limits such stem cell research so that embryos must be destroyed 14 days after the first cell division.

**“When we reintroduce this legislation, it is my intention that we also include a provision that will expand the number of stem cell lines available for federal research funding, a need clearly demonstrated by these studies,” Senator Feinstein said.**

**“Throughout our nation, states are moving ahead individually with stem cell work. California has passed a huge proposition which enables California to take a major leadership role in the creation of new stem cell lines and will fund about \$300 million a year in embryonic stem cell research for the next decade. That’s more than 10 times the annual spending federally.**

**“Other states, such as New Jersey, Wisconsin, and Connecticut, are now moving ahead. I believe it is critical to prohibit human cloning but allow carefully monitored and regulated stem cell research to go ahead. And I believe the federal government should play a major role in this effort – we owe it to the millions of Americans with diseases that could be cured through this research.”**

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