



School of Medicine
Department of Neurology

ADULT NEUROLOGY

February 26, 2007

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CHILD NEUROLOGY

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Senator David J. Shafer
421 State Capitol
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Dear Senator Shafer:

You have asked me to review for medical and scientific accuracy the findings of fact set out in Section 2 of Senate Bill 148, the Saving the Cure Act. I write this letter in my capacity as a medical doctor, clinical researcher, and stem cell scientist and not in my capacity as Chairman of the Department of Neurology at the Medical College of Georgia.

1. The first finding of fact correctly states that millions of Americans suffer from diseases that may be more effectively treated or even cured by stem cells.
2. The second finding of fact accurately describes the current ethical controversy over embryonic stem cell research.
3. The third finding of fact correctly identifies the scientific difficulties encountered by embryonic stem cell researchers.
4. The fourth finding of fact correctly states the availability of stem cells from sources other than the human embryo and from processes not resulting in the destruction of human embryonic life.
5. The fifth finding of fact correctly states the availability of stem cells for medical research and treatment in umbilical cord blood, placental tissue and amniotic fluid.
6. The sixth finding of fact correctly identifies several diseases for which treatments have been developed from postnatal stem cells. I would suggest adding Krabbe's disease, a fatal childhood inborn error of metabolism, and restating the finding as follows: "Post natal stem cells, specifically umbilical cord stem cells, are already being used in treatments for anemia, leukemia, lymphoma, sickle cell disease and Krabbe's disease."
7. The seventh finding of fact correctly describes the range of disease for which stem cell therapies are currently being studied. Given the definitions set out in the same section of the bill, I would suggest restating the finding as follows: "Stem cell therapies from nondestructive stem cell research are in clinical trials for multiple sclerosis, juvenile diabetes, Crohn's disease, rheumatoid arthritis, myocardial infarction, stroke, lupus and spinal cord injury."
8. The eighth finding of fact correctly describes the range of diseases for which postnatal stem cells are currently being studied.

9. The ninth finding of fact correctly describes the recent discovery involving prenatal amniotic stem cells.

10. The tenth finding of fact correctly states that prenatal amniotic fluid possess the approximate pluripotentiality of embryonic stem cells without the associated risk of tumor formation.

11. The eleventh finding of fact correctly states destructive stem cell research has not yielded effective treatment or cure for any disease.

I applaud your efforts to advance stem cell research and express to you my personal support of Senate Bill 148.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D Hess", written in a cursive style.

David C. Hess, M.D.
Chairman and Professor
Department of Neurology
Medical College of Georgia