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**President Obama forces taxpayers to subsidize  
the unethical over the ethical, the unworkable  
over what works, and hype & hyperbole over hope**

Remarks to the Press

**Rep. Chris Smith**

March 9, 2009

At a time when highly significant—even historic—breakthroughs in adult stem cell research have become almost daily occurrences and almost to the point of being mundane, President Obama has chosen to turn back the clock, and starting today, will force taxpayers to subsidize the unethical over the ethical, the unworkable over what works, and hype and hyperbole over hope.

Human embryo destroying stem cell research is not only unethical, unworkable, and unreliable, it is now demonstrably unnecessary.

Assertions that leftover embryos are better off dead so that their stem cells can be derived is dehumanizing and cheapens human life. There is no such thing as leftover human life. Ask the snowflake children—cryogenically frozen embryos who were adopted—their lives are precious and priceless.

Recent spectacular breakthroughs in noncontroversial adult stem cell research and clinical applications to effectuate cures or the mitigation of disease or disability have been well documented. For several years, significant progress has been achieved with adult stem cells derived from nonembryonic sources, including umbilical cord blood, bone marrow, brain, amniotic fluid, skin and even fat cells. Patients with diseases, including leukemia, type 1 diabetes, multiple sclerosis, lupus, sickle cell anemia and dozens of other maladies have significantly benefited from adult stem cell transfers. Stephen Sprague, who will speak in a moment, was diagnosed with leukemia, got his umbilical cord blood transfer in 1997, and is walking proof that cord blood stem cells work.

Now the greatest of all breakthroughs—induced Pluripotent Stem Cells-iPSC—offers hope for cures using embryo-like cells, without killing embryos.

On November 20, 2007, Japanese scientists Dr. Shinya Yamanaka and Wisconsin researcher Dr. James Thomson shocked the scientific community by independently announcing their ability to derive iPS cells by reprogramming regular skin cells.

And unlike embryonic stem cells that kill the donor, are highly unstable, have a propensity to morph into tumors and are likely to be rejected by the patient unless strong anti-rejection medicines are administered, induced pluripotent stem cells, iPS cells, have none of those deficiencies and are emerging as the future, the greatest hope of regenerative medicine.

Mr. Obama is way behind the times. Making Americans pay for embryo destroying stem cell research is not change we can believe in. Far from it. It is politics! A decade ago, the false hope of embryo destroying research made it difficult to oppose. That is no longer the case.

So the question arises. Why persist in the dehumanizing of nascent human life when better alternatives exist, alternatives that work on both ethics grounds and efficacy grounds. Nonembryonic stem cell research is the present and it is the future of regenerative medicine, and the only responsible way forward.

While President Obama and some Members of Congress still don't get it, the breakthroughs in Adult Stem Cell research have not been lost on the mainstream press.

For example, on November 21, 2007 Reuters reported, and I quote, "Two separate teams of researchers announced on Tuesday they had transformed ordinary skin cells into batches of cells that look and act like embryonic stem cells, but without using cloning technology and without making embryos."

The New York Times reported on this same day, "Two teams of scientists reported yesterday that they had turned human skin cells into what appear to be embryonic stem cells without having to make or destroy an embryo—a feat that could quell the ethical debate troubling the field."

The Associated Press said, "Scientists have created the equivalent of embryonic stem cells from ordinary skin cells, a breakthrough that could someday produce new treatments for diseases without the explosive moral questions of embryo cloning."

Even University of Wisconsin's Dr. James Thomson, the man who first cultured embryonic stem cells, told The New York Times, "Now with the new technique, it will not be long before the stem cell wars are a distant memory. A decade from now, this will just be a funny historical footnote."

Dr. Thomson told the Detroit Free Press, "While ducking ethical debate wasn't the goal, (it is) probably the beginning of the end of the controversy over embryonic stem cells."

In Medical News Today, Dr. Thomson went on to say, "Speaking about this latest breakthrough, the induced cells do all the things embryonic cells do. It's going to completely change the field.

"The other advantage of the new method is the fact that using cells drawn from the patient's own skin, the stem cells can be customized to the patient, bringing numerous

benefits, such as the elimination of immune system rejection. They are probably more clinically relevant than embryonic stem cells."

Last Monday, more good news, no, let's call it great news on the iPS front. Research teams from the United Kingdom and Canada published two papers in the prestigious scientific journal, *Nature*, announcing that they had successfully reprogrammed ordinary skin cells into induced pluripotent skin cells without the use of viruses to transmit the reprogramming genes to the cell. Using a "piggyback" system, as they called it, the scientists were able to insert DNA where they could alter the genetic make-up of the regular cell before being harmlessly removed.

According to many scientists, the removal of potentially cancer-causing viruses means this breakthrough increases the likelihood that iPS cells will be safe for clinical use in human patients. The lead scientist from Canada, Andras Nagy, was quoted in the *Washington Post* saying, "It's a leap forward in the safe application of these cells. We expect this to have a massive impact on this field."

And George Daley at Children's Hospital in Boston said, "It's very significant. I think it's a major step forward in realizing the value of these cells for medical research." Except for Mr. Obama.

This breakthrough, suggests the momentum has decisively and irrevocably swung to noncontroversial stem cell research like iPS cells and away from embryo-destroying research. The lead scientist from the UK was quoted in the *BBC* saying, "It is a step towards the practical use of reprogrammed cells in medicine, perhaps even eliminating the need for human embryos as a source of stem cells."

*Time* magazine reports, reporting on the efficacy and the advantage of iPS stem cells, "The iPS technology is the ultimate manufacturing process for cells; it is now possible for researchers to churn out unlimited quantities of a patient's stem cells, which can then be turned into any of the cells that the body might need to replace or repair."

Despite all of this new and extraordinary progress in the iPS and adult stem cell research arena, the Obama administration and the House and Senate Democratic leadership remain obsessed with killing human embryos for experimentation at taxpayer expense.