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Dear Senator:

We understand that the Senate will begin consideration this week of legislation to address the complex scientific, moral, and ethical issues related to embryonic stem cell research. I am writing on behalf of the American Bar Association to urge you to support H.R. 810, legislation to provide for federal support of human embryonic stem cell research.

H.R. 810 would direct the Secretary of the Health and Human Services to conduct and support research that utilizes human embryonic stem cells under strict scientific and ethical standards. The legislation ensures that only embryos that will not be used by individuals seeking fertility treatments and will otherwise be discarded are eligible for stem cell derivation. We believe that H.R. 810 is a critical step forward to achieve the promise of stem cell research.

Many thousands of people in the United States and millions around the world suffer and die from diseases that may be ameliorated or even cured by new therapies derived from therapeutic stem cell research. Yet opposition to federal support for this research has hampered efforts to achieve its promise domestically, while foreign research efforts continue gaining strength. We believe that H.R. 810, which passed the House of Representatives on a strong bipartisan vote on May 24, 2005, demonstrates that ethical concerns can be satisfactorily addressed while the scientific promise is pursued.

The ABA opposes governmental actions, including laws and Executive Branch policies, which would prohibit scientific research conducted for therapeutic purposes, including research involving cell nucleus transfer that is not intended to replicate a human being, provided that the research is conducted in conformity with accepted research, ethical and legal safeguards. Governmental action that would severely restrict the ability of scientists to investigate potential avenues of medical advancement offered by research cloning poses a direct and serious threat to freedom of scientific inquiry.

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The law is at a crossroads in dealing with this complex challenge. The course chosen by Congress today regarding this field of research will help either protect or diminish the freedom of scientific inquiry in the future. We strongly urge you to support H.R. 810 and to permit the continuation of biomedical research involving embryonic stem cells that is undertaken with appropriate safeguards against misuse.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert D. Evans".

Robert D. Evans