

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
OFFICE

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

Governmental Affairs Office

740 Fifteenth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005-1022
(202) 662-1760
FAX: (202) 662-1762

DIRECTOR

Robert D. Evans
(202) 662-1765
rdevans@staff.abanet.org

DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Denise A. Cardman
(202) 662-1761
cardmand@staff.abanet.org

SENIOR LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL

R. Larson Frisby
(202) 662-1098
frisbyr@staff.abanet.org

Lillian B. Gaskin

(202) 662-1768
gaskinl@staff.abanet.org

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL

Kristi Gaines
(202) 662-1763
gainesk@staff.abanet.org

Kenneth J. Goldsmith

(202) 662-1789
goldsmithk@staff.abanet.org

Kerry M. Lawrence

(202) 662-1766
lawrenck@staff.abanet.org

Ellen McBarnette

(202) 662-1767
mcbarnee@staff.abanet.org

E. Bruce Nicholson

(202) 662-1769
nicholsonb@staff.abanet.org

DIRECTOR GRASSROOTS
OPERATIONS/LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL

Julie M. Strandlie
(202) 662-1764
strandlj@staff.abanet.org

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
LAW CONSULTANT

Hayden Gregory
(202) 662-1772
gregoryh@staff.abanet.org

STATE LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL

Rita C. Aguilar
(202) 662-1780
aguilarr@staff.abanet.org

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Julie Pasatiempo
(202) 662-1776
jpasatiempo@staff.abanet.org

STAFF DIRECTOR FOR
INFORMATION SERVICES

Sharon Greene
(202) 662-1014
greenes@staff.abanet.org

EDITOR WASHINGTON LETTER

Rhonda J. McMillion
(202) 662-1017

July 19, 2006

Dear Representative:

The American Bar Association urges you to vote to override the President's veto of H.R. 810, the "Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act." This legislation would provide federal support of human embryonic stem cell research.

For over five years, Congress has debated the complex scientific, moral, and ethical issues related to 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 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.

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 urge you to vote to override the veto of 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". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Robert D. Evans