



BIOTECHNOLOGY
INDUSTRY
ORGANIZATION

May 7, 2004

The Honorable Kathleen Blanco
Governor, State of Louisiana
State Capitol
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-7099

Dear Governor Blanco:

On behalf of the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO), I am writing to express concern with legislation currently being considered in the Louisiana State House that could have a profound impact on a promising area of therapeutic research. House Bill 803 would prohibit all forms of human cloning in the state. Unfortunately, in addition it would also prohibit a very promising area of biomedical research.

For the record, we are categorically opposed to human cloning for reproductive purposes. It is too dangerous technically and raises far too many ethical and social questions. However, using cloning technology (somatic cell nuclear transfer) to clone human cells for therapeutic purposes is considered one of the most promising avenues of research for developing cures for a host of diseases and disabilities including Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, diabetes and various forms of cancer.

We support recent recommendations by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) that the cloning of human beings for reproductive purposes should be prohibited. However, the report also states that, "the scientific and medical considerations that justify a ban on human reproductive cloning at this time are not applicable to nuclear transplantation to produce stem cells. Because of the considerable potential for developing new medical therapies to treat life-threatening diseases and advancing biomedical knowledge, the panel supported the

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conclusion of a previous National Academies' report—*Stem Cells and the Future of Regenerative Medicine*—that recommends that biomedical research using nuclear transplantation to produce stem cells be permitted.” (A copy of this report is available on the NAS Web site, www.nationalacademies.org.)

I encourage you to also consider a very impassioned argument put forth by Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah: (Attached please find the full text of the statement.)

“I come to this issue with a strong pro-life, pro-family record. But I also strongly believe that a critical part of being pro-life is to support measures that help the living.

Some, including many in the Right to Life community, oppose this research on the grounds that the new cell created in the laboratory becomes a new human life at the moment it is electronically activated. That is a view I respect, but with which I do not agree. At the core of my support for regenerative medicine research is my belief that human life requires and begins in a mother's nurturing womb....”

“Regenerative medicine is pro-life and pro-family; it enhances, not diminishes, human life. If encouraged to flourish, it can improve the lives of millions of Americans and could lead to new scientific frontiers not now in sight. I urge my colleagues in the Senate and the American public to support this bill that opposes human cloning but promotes regenerative medicine using nuclear transplantation.”

U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch, April, 2002

Senator Hatch agrees that the implications of human cloning need to be addressed by scientists, ethicists, religious leaders, health professionals, patients and broader society. We are concerned that, unless people clearly understand the benefits and limitations of different scientific techniques, well-meaning legislation will continue to threaten vital research.

Governor Blanco

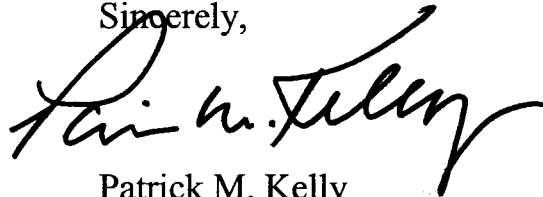
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While we are opposed to House Bill 803 we are supportive of legislation currently pending in the Louisiana Senate, SB 782, which would prohibit reproductive cloning while encouraging stem cell research. This legislation closely mirrors the bi-partisan legislation being considered by the U.S. Senate.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns. We realize this is a difficult issue and are committed to working with you and your Administration to provide any information or answer any questions. Please feel free to have your staff contact me at (202) 962-9200.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick M. Kelly", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Patrick M. Kelly
Vice President,
State Government Relations
Biotechnology Industry Organization