



International

Stem Cell Research Supporters Urge UN to Vote Against 'Therapeutic' Cloning Ban

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(CNSNews.com) - Stem cell research proponents are calling for the U.N. to reject a ban on therapeutic cloning, or "destructive" cloning, as it is called by its opponents.

Somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT) or "therapeutic cloning," is the cloning of an embryo to research its stem cells, the building blocks of skin, bone, brain or nerve tissue, in the hopes that it will provide treatment for diseases.

The Coalition for the Advancement of Medical Research (CAMR) presented a letter to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and the General Assembly urging them to reject a vote banning SCNT.

"This letter sends a clear message to all United Nations delegates and policy leaders around the world that any ban on therapeutic cloning research will be strongly opposed," said Daniel Perry, president of CAMR.

The National Right to Life (NRL), a pro-life organization, claims that therapeutic cloning is still cloning, even if it is used for a purpose other than birth. On its website it cites various scientists who have said that therapeutic cloning, or as NRL calls it "cloning for research," creates a human embryo.

NRL encourages the use of adult stem cell research which has demonstrated more value to date and does not require killing a human being.

Other pro-lifers call therapeutic cloning "destructive" cloning because it kills the embryo once it has the stem cells to do its research.

CAMR joined forces with the Genetics Policy Institute (GPI) and the Republic of Korea UN mission to gather a group of patient advocates before the start of final UN deliberations on a proposed worldwide treaty banning therapeutic cloning research, which was sponsored by Costa Rica.

Various countries, including Singapore, have outlawed human cloning but are allowing therapeutic cloning because of its research benefits to help diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

"Therapeutic cloning could lead to new treatments and cures for millions worldwide facing incurable diseases and conditions such as cancer, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, diabetes, ALS and spinal cord injury. SCNT is not reproductive cloning or creating babies which we all agree is unethical; it is about improving lives," Perry said.