



Genetics Policy Institute
4000 PONCE DE LEON BLVD. ~ SUITE 470
CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA 33146
T: (305) 777-0268 F: (305) 667-5123
WWW.GENPOL.ORG

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Contact: Ryan Kuresman, GCSA, 202-293-5870 * Mobile: 703-346-6851

Genetics Policy Institute Implores Leaders to Uphold Reputable Science in Creating Stem Cell Policy

Coral Gables – The Genetics Policy Institute strongly urges congressional leaders to pursue policies based upon real science and not be influenced by abstract fears generated by the foes of stem cell research. GPI urges the banning of reproductive cloning of babies, which is unethical. GPI endorses policies to allow therapeutic cloning of stem cells, which holds the promise of understanding, treatment and possible cures for hundreds of millions of people worldwide afflicted with such devastating conditions as Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, spinal cord injuries, heart diseases and a host of other diseases for which a cure is yet unknown.

“This is a policy debate that GPI has led from the beginning in the United Nations,” said Bernard Siegel, GPI’s Executive Director. “In June, GPI brought a dozen leading scientists from four continents to the UN for the purpose of educating key decision-makers on the potential for therapeutic cloning, which will enable scientists to discover the next generation of cures.”

“Opponents of the research often use extremely misleading arguments. First, they will say that cells are the equivalent of persons, an argument that is scientifically unsound. Second, they selectively quote scientists and take out of context preliminary studies to seed confusion. Third, they base their objections on preliminary results and thereby seek to ban an entire area of promising scientific research on some preliminary finding in research areas that may or may not have relevance to the policy deliberations,” said Siegel. “Foes of research are using scare tactics and fears of biotechnology to panic lawmakers and the public to make far-reaching policy decisions banning research, producing ill-founded laws which will delay research and thus prolong the misery of millions.”

During GPI’s June 2nd UN Science Conference, Dr. Douglas Melton of Harvard University implored the UN to protect therapeutic cloning. Addressing delegates, Melton said, “I think that embryonic stem cells and stem cells in general have an enormous potential to teach us about regeneration, animal development, and tissue repair... This is an important area of research, because as many of you will know, children who suffer from these disease are innocent. They haven’t gotten them because of any special behavior. These diseases come to them, and it’s our moral obligation, I think, to find a way to treat them more effectively.”

“The Genetics Policy Institute is especially concerned with the actions of groups like the Institute of Biotechnology & the Human Future. That group is an unlikely alliance of special interests that come to Capital Hill not to enlighten but to confuse policy makers,” said Siegel, “GPI will continue our mission to educate decision-makers and the public both in the US and abroad by providing a platform to present leading scientists to dispel the confusion within the debate.”

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The Genetics Policy Institute (GPI) is the leading international nonprofit organization dedicated to establishing a legal framework to advance scientific research for future cures and is a leading defender of stem cell research worldwide. Please visit us online at www.genpol.org