

EMBRYONIC STEM CELL  
RESEARCH

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I rise today to express my strong support of expanded embryonic stem cell research and to thank President Obama for reversing the Federal limitations imposed on stem cell research by the previous administration. I also thank my colleagues Senators HARKIN, SPECTER, FEINSTEIN, HATCH, and REID, for their ongoing leadership on this issue.

Research on human embryonic stem cells began in 1998 and is still only in its infancy. In this short time, researchers have made great strides in stem cell research, discovering the scientific potential of embryonic stem cells and their ability to treat and cure diseases that affect patients and families across our country. Unfortunately, however, the true potential of embryonic stem cell research has not yet been realized. For the past 8 years, Federal funding has been limited to the study of embryonic stem cell lines derived before August 9, 2001, significantly hampering the ability of researchers to effectively study the full potential of these cells. Political issues, funding considerations, and the limited pipeline of talented researchers specializing in this new field have slowed the development of a robust research community focused on stem cell investigation.

Stem cells could be a boon to medical research and treatment in a variety of ways: as replacement cells for those cells that have been lost or destroyed because of disease; as tools for studying early events in human development; as test systems for new drug therapies; and as vehicles to deliver genes that could correct defects. The more that is learned about embryonic stem cells, the better scientists can assess their full therapeutic potential and that of other stem cell types.

This research is so critical to the scientific understanding of diseases, therapies, and cures that impact millions of Americans. Embryonic stem cells could lead to treatments for diseases that afflict up to 100 million Americans, including Alzheimer's, Parkinson's disease, diabetes, cancer, heart disease, spinal cord injuries, and so many other debilitating conditions.

Now, I have always been a supporter of stem cell research and have long recognized the importance of this critical research to the scientific community. However, stem cell research became personal for me in 2007 when my oldest granddaughter Elle was diagnosed with diabetes. But my family is not alone in either struggling with the disease of juvenile diabetes or recognizing the importance of stem cell research to a potential cure for the disease. Mimi Silverman of Bedford, NH, speaks eloquently about what it is like to be the parent of a diabetic. Her daughter Abby, who is now 30, was diagnosed with diabetes at the age of 7. Mimi knows about the toll that diabetes takes on the entire family and she

talks about the psychological effects on her family, not knowing what each day will bring. She describes the disease as a ticking timebomb in which there is always uncertainty and underlying apprehension.

A few years ago, Abby, Mimi's daughter, was 2 weeks away from getting married. She was living alone in Minneapolis, 1,500 miles away from her fiancé and her family. She was alone in her apartment and because of diabetes, she fell unconscious. Luckily, her fiancé called. He realized that Abby was incoherent and he was able to contact the apartment manager to unlock the door and get her help. But had her fiancé not called when he did, in all likelihood, Abby would not be alive today. Mimi is now a leading advocate in New Hampshire in support of stem cell research.

Laura Clark, from Antrim, NH, is 25 years old. Five years ago she was in the final year of her nursing studies at the University of New Hampshire. Unfortunately, she was in a tragic car accident on the way to the movies. As a result of the collision, Laura's neck was crushed and after two weeks in intensive care and 11 weeks in rehabilitation, Laura recovered but is now quadriplegic. While her spirit is strong, her life has changed dramatically. The accident not only affected Laura, but of course her family was affected as well. Her mother Kathy quit her job to stay home to take care of Laura, and her younger sister, who was in high school at the time, was not able to go on to college. Laura doesn't give up the hope that some day, as a result of stem cell research, a scientist will discover a way to help her regain her independence.

Stem cell research holds the potential to help Elle, to help Abby, and to help Laura, and so many others in New Hampshire and across this country. I thank President Obama for recognizing the importance of this issue and for providing an opportunity for us to reverse the stem cell policy that has slowed the pace of medical research and hindered the development of therapeutic treatments for medical conditions ranging from diabetes and spinal cord injuries to Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. I now look forward to working with my colleagues in the Senate and the new administration to ensure continued support of stem cell research. Through increased funding and ensuring that moral and ethical guidelines for research are established in this growing field, I am hopeful that the scientific community will continue with crucial stem cell innovations that will positively affect the lives of those three young women whom I talked about and so many people across this country.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS ACT

Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, last week when considering H.R. 1105, the

Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009, I filed technical corrections to the table of congressionally directed spending items contained in the explanatory statement offered by the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives which accompanies the bill H.R. 1105.

I wish to add the following technical correction to the joint explanatory statement that accompanied H.R. 1105:

On page H2368 of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD of February 23, 2009, the words "Perkins Career and Technical Education Act" should read "Higher Education Opportunity Act" and the Senate requesters associated with this item should be changed to "Conrad; Domenici; Dorgan."

FOREIGN OPERATIONS APPROPRIATIONS CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the Fiscal Year 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act, which President Obama signed yesterday, contains \$36.6 billion in discretionary budget authority for the Department of State and Foreign Operations, which is the same amount approved by the Appropriations Committee in July 2008.

This represents a \$1.6 billion decrease from former President Bush's budget request of \$38.2 billion. I repeat—this legislation is \$1.6 billion below what former President Bush recommended in his budget.

It is a \$3.8 billion increase from the fiscal year 2008 enacted level, not counting supplemental funds, and \$968 million above the fiscal year 2008 level including fiscal year 2008 supplemental and fiscal year 2009 bridge funds.

The State and Foreign Operations portion of the omnibus does not contain any congressional earmarks. It does, as is customary and appropriate, specify funding levels for authorized programs, certain countries, and international organizations like the United Nations and the World Bank.

I want to thank Chairman INOUE, President Pro Tempore BYRD, and Ranking Member COCHRAN for their support throughout this protracted process. And I want to thank Senator GREGG, who as ranking member of the State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee worked with me to produce this bipartisan legislation that was reported by the Appropriations Committee with only one dissenting vote.

It was imperative that we enacted this legislation. The alternative of a year-long continuing resolution would have been devastating for the operations of the State Department and our embassies, consulates and missions around the world, and for programs that support a myriad of United States foreign policy interests and that protect the security of the American people. Many Senators on both sides of the aisle were encouraged that Senator Clinton was nominated for and confirmed to be Secretary of State. If we