

Washington, DC -- The U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation today to authorize federal funding for life-saving stem cell research. U.S. Representative Michael Arcuri (D-Utica) voted for the "Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2007" (H.R. 3). Arcuri is a cosponsor of the bipartisan bill along with 207 Democrats and 13 Republicans.

"I've listened to stories from around the 24th congressional district of families affected by life-threatening and debilitating illnesses - children with childhood diabetes and men and women with spinal cord injuries, Lupus, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's," said Arcuri. "These people fight daily against the odds in the hope that stem cell research will give them a new lease on life. Stem cell research gives hope to thousands of people around the country. People in Upstate New York support ethically responsible, life-saving research and I stand with them today."

Former Representative Sherwood Boehlert (NY-24) also supported stem cell research and voted in favor of a similar bill in the last Congress when it passed the House by a 238-194 vote and the Senate by a 63-37 vote. The President vetoed it last July.

H.R.3 increases the number of lines of stem cells that are eligible to be used in federally-funded research. The bill authorizes Health and Human Services to support research involving embryonic stem cells meeting certain ethical criteria, regardless of the date the stem cells were derived. Current policy allows federal funds to be used for research only on those stem cell lines that existed when President Bush issued an executive order on August 9, 2001.

H.R. 3 creates an ethical framework – stronger than the President's current policy- that must be followed in conducting this research under the guidance of the National Institutes of Health. The bill only authorizes the use of stem cell lines generated from embryos that would otherwise be discarded by fertility clinics.

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