

## Eshoo Urges President to Lift Restrictions on Stem Cell Research

April 28, 2004

Eshoo Urges President to Lift Restrictions on Stem Cell Research

April 28, 2004

Washington, D.C. -- Rep. Anna G. Eshoo, D-Palo Alto, and 205 bi-partisan Members of Congress wrote President Bush today urging him to lift federal restrictions on stem cell research. Silicon Valley is a leading center for biotechnology research, including research on stem cells.

"Embryonic stem cells have the potential to be used to treat and better understand deadly and disabling diseases that affect more than 100 million Americans, such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injury, and many others," the letter said.

The letter goes on to highlight four challenges with the current federal policy on stem cell research:

- While it originally appeared that 78 embryonic stem cell lines would be available for research under the federal policy, in fact, the National Institutes of Health recently announced that the number of potentially available embryonic stem cell lines has decreased from 78 to 61, because 17 of the stem cell lines have not grown successfully and therefore are not eligible for federal funding.

- All available stem cell lines are contaminated with mouse feeder cells, making uncertain their therapeutic use for humans.

- Scientists are reporting that it is increasingly difficult to attract new scientists to this area of research because of their concerns that funding restrictions will keep this research from being successful.

- This promising field of research is moving overseas. We have already seen researchers move to countries like the United Kingdom, which have more supportive policies. In addition, leadership in this area of research has shifted to the United Kingdom, which sees this scientific area as a cornerstone of its biotech industry and which is leading the International Stem Cell Forum, made up of scientific agencies from nearly a dozen countries.

##

