

House bill funds embryonic stem cell study

January 10 2007

As the U.S. House seeks to expand embryonic stem cell research funding, the White House is promoting stem cell development methods that don't harm embryos.

The Bush administration confirmed it has been working on a possible executive order related to stem cell research, the Wall Street Journal said Wednesday. Stem cell research advocates said the order would endorse funding for research involving non-embryonic stem cells.

Regarding House action, supporters of embryonic stem cell research said the bill would lead to lifesaving treatments for illnesses. The bill would allow federal funding of stem cell research using embryos developed for fertility purposes but about to be discarded. People for whom the embryos were created would have to consent to the donation in writing.

The anticipated executive order doesn't indicate a change in the limits President Bush placed on embryonic stem cell research in 2001.

While not discussing the timing or content of the possible order, White House spokesman Tony Fratto said "we are clearly working on ways we can direct whatever tools and funding we can" to explore stem cell research that doesn't harm embryos.

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Citation: House bill funds embryonic stem cell study (2007, January 10) retrieved 20 March 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2007-01-house-bill-funds-embryonic-stem.html>

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