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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW POLL: MOST AMERICANS OPPOSE FEDERAL FUNDING OF STEM CELL RESEARCH USING HUMAN EMBRYOS

WASHINGTON-- A majority of Americans, 52 percent, oppose federal funding of embryonic stem cell research while just 36 percent support it, according to a new poll commissioned by the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

Such funding is being considered by the U.S. House of Representatives, which may soon vote on a bill (H.R. 810) to fund research requiring human embryos to be destroyed for their stem cells.

When respondents were told that scientists disagree on whether embryonic stem cells, or stem cells from adult tissues and umbilical cord blood, may end up being most successful in treating diseases, 60% favored funding only the research avenues that raise no moral problem, while 22% favored funding all stem cell research including the kind that involves destroying embryos.

“It is always wrong for government to promote the destruction of innocent human life,” said Richard M. Doerflinger, Deputy Director of the USCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities.

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“To do so when a clear majority of the taxpayers themselves reject this approach would be especially irresponsible.”

The questions were part of a national survey conducted by International Communications Research, which polled over one thousand American adults by telephone May 6-11. A comparison of the results with an identical poll from last year shows a clear trend *against* funding stem cell research that requires destroying early human embryos. In August 2004, Americans opposed funding the research 47 percent to 43 percent. The follow-up question on kinds of stem cell research has received a more consistent response, with the 2004 poll showing a 61% to 23% margin in favor of funding only morally unproblematic avenues of research.

The new findings are also consistent with a recent Winston Group poll of Republicans commissioned by GOP Congressmen supporting H.R. 810. The Winston poll sponsors have touted a 57- to 40-percent poll result seeming to favor embryonic stem cell research among Republicans; but that poll showed just 36 percent of Republicans in favor of expanded *federal funding* of embryonic stem cell research, and 58 percent in favor of President Bush's policy of limited funding or no government funding at all.

“Congress should not be misled on this important issue,” said Doerflinger. “Most Americans oppose federal funding of research which requires destroying human embryos.”

The International Communications Research poll questions and results follow.

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Questions asked by International Communications Research, a national research firm headquartered in Media, Pennsylvania. A weighted sample of 1010 American adults was surveyed by telephone May 6-11, 2005, with a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percent.

1. Stem cells are the basic cells from which all of a person's tissues and organs develop. Congress is considering the question of federal funding for experiments using stem cells from human embryos. The live embryos would be destroyed in their first week of development to obtain these cells. Do you support or oppose using your federal tax dollars for such experiments?

Support	36.0%
Oppose	51.6%
Don't know	10.5%
Refused	1.9%

2. Stem cells for research can be obtained by destroying human embryos. They can also be obtained from adults, from placentas left over from live births, and in other ways that do no harm to the donor. Scientists disagree on which source may end up being most successful in treating diseases. How would you prefer your tax dollars to be used this year for stem cell research?

(Options rotated)

Supporting all methods, including those that require destroying human embryos, to see which will be most successful 22.4%

or

Supporting research using adult stem cells and other alternatives, to see if there is no need to destroy human embryos for research. 60.2%

Neither (volunteered)	7.8%
Don't know	8.0%
Refused	1.6%