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Dear President Bush,

We represent the Board of Directors of the International Society for Stem Cell Research, the primary international organization of scientific, ethical and clinical researchers in the field of stem cell biology. Our members study stem cells of all types including stem cells from human adult tissue and from human embryos and germ cells. Millions of people worldwide depend on the advances that medical research brings and yearn for the knowledge and therapies that can help alleviate the human suffering caused by injury and illness. The goal of the ISSCR is to meet this challenge.

On Sunday, June 13, 2004, our organization concluded its annual meeting. During this four-day meeting, leading researchers from around the world presented their most recent findings on stem cells of all types. Many important advances have been made since ISSCR's 2003 meeting. Indeed, the rate of discovery and scientific vigor in this field has increased significantly over the past year. The data presented at this meeting make it clearer than ever that research on all types of stem cells should be pursued with the goals of reducing human suffering and better understanding human physiology.

In light of recent scientific work that offers great promise in human stem cell research, we urge you in the strongest possible terms to allow full federal funding for all possible lines of work on human stem cells. The United States should encourage the very best research in our field, as it has so fruitfully done in other areas of biomedical research. Our scientific, ethical and medical researchers support reasonable regulation and oversight of our work, and we call for clear and rational limits for the use of techniques such as nuclear transfer. Based on the most current scientific data and ethical considerations, our organization supports the following points:

- 1) Research on all types of stem cells warrants increased federal funding. These include stem cells found in fetal and adult tissues and pluripotent stem cells isolated from blastocysts or derived by nuclear transfer.
- 2) Federal funding for basic research should be allowed for all human embryonic/pluripotent stem cell lines derived from excess IVF blastocysts that would otherwise be destroyed, following appropriate informed consent and donation practices.
- 3) The derivation of new human pluripotent stem cell lines by nuclear transfer (NT) should be supported and publicly funded.
- 4) Appropriate regulation of research is important and should be developed by scientists and regulators working together to provide ongoing scientific and ethical oversight to ensure compliance with the above, as well as to establish norms for good basic research, clinical investigation and laboratory practices.
- 5) Given current scientific and medical safety concerns, and widespread moral and ethical consensus, human reproductive cloning, defined as implantation into a uterus of morulae or blastocysts derived by nuclear transfer, should be prohibited at this time. In this context, ISSCR commends the Food and Drug Administration for its successful interdiction of such practice in the United States.

Thank you for your attention to this pressing issue. We look forward to a change in federal policy so that the very best science can be allowed to proceed.

Sincerely,

ISSCR Board of Directors