March 26, 2001

The Honorable George W. Bush  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush:

Attached is a letter that our three associations, joined by 112 college and university presidents and chancellors, have written to Secretary Thompson. The letter urges him to permit the current National Institutes of Health guidelines governing stem cell research to remain in effect, since he is conducting the review of this research that you have requested.

We wanted to provide you with a copy of this letter so that you would be aware of our support for the NIH guidelines. This is a critical issue, as the potential of stem cell research for relieving human illness and suffering is enormous.

Thank you for carefully considering this matter, which is of concern to research universities throughout the United States.

Cordially,

Stanley O. Ikenberry  
President  
American Council on Education

C. Peter Magrath  
President  
National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges

Nils Hasselmo  
President  
Association of American Universities

cc: Vice President Dick Cheney  
Secretary Tommy Thompson
March 26, 2001

Dear Representative/ Senator:

Our three associations, joined by 112 college and university presidents and chancellors, have written to Secretary Thompson to urge him to permit the current National Institutes of Health guidelines governing stem cell research to remain in effect.

We wanted to provide you with a copy of this letter so that you would be aware of our support for the NIH guidelines. We have also sent copies of the letter to President Bush and Vice President Cheney. This is a critical issue, as the potential of stem cell research for relieving human illness and suffering is enormous.

Thank you for carefully considering this matter, which is of concern to research universities throughout the United States.

Cordially,

Stanley O. Ikenberry  
President  
American Council on Education

Nils Hasselmo  
President  
Association of American Universities

C. Peter Magrath  
President  
National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges
March 26, 2001

The Honorable Tommy Thompson
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Our three associations, joined by the 112 college and university presidents and chancellors listed below, are writing to urge you to permit the current National Institutes of Health guidelines governing human pluripotent stem cell research to remain in effect.

Along with patient groups, scientists, and research institutions, we believe that the discovery of human pluripotent stem cells is one of the most promising biomedical developments in years, and that stem cell research holds exceptional promise for developing cures or treatments for many dread diseases, including Alzheimer’s, diabetes, Parkinson’s, spinal cord injury, cancer, and heart disease. We believe that the stringent guidelines that NIH developed last year provide the appropriate federal oversight and standards that will allow this research to flourish in an ethically rigorous manner.

Some opponents of this research argue that adult stem cells provide sufficient research opportunities, and that research on pluripotent stem cells need not proceed. A group of 80 Nobel laureates eloquently addressed this concern in a letter dated February 22, 2001, to President Bush, saying:

It is premature to conclude that adult stem cells have the same potential as embryonic stem cells -- and that potential will almost certainly vary from disease to disease. Current evidence suggests that adult stem cells have markedly restricted differentiation potential. Therefore, for disorders that prove not to be treatable with adult stem cells, impeding human pluripotent stem cell research risks unnecessary delay for millions of patients who may die or endure needless suffering while the effectiveness of adult stem cells is evaluated.

As the Nobelists go on to say,

The therapeutic promise of pluripotent stem cells is based on more than two decades of research in mice and other animal models. This research confirms that pluripotent stem cells are capable of generating all of the cell types of the body. Most importantly, the therapeutic potential of these cells has already been demonstrated... Nerve cells have successfully reversed the progression of the equivalent of multiple sclerosis in mice and have restored function to the limbs of partially paralyzed rats; and insulin-secreting cells have normalized blood glucose in diabetic mice. These findings suggest that therapies using these cells may one day provide important new strategies for the treatment for a host of currently untreatable disorders.
The promise of this research is real but we would not urge federal support for it without first exploring all of the ethical issues and being satisfied that adequate safeguards are in place. We agree with the National Bioethics Advisory Commission report of September 1999, which concluded that, on balance, this research should proceed with public funding. We also believe that the guidelines developed by the NIH will ensure that this research is conducted in an ethical manner.

As your department proceeds with your review of the NIH guidelines, we therefore urge you to allow federally funded research on human pluripotent stem cells to proceed by maintaining these guidelines – thus allowing the potential of these stem cells for relieving human pain and suffering to be unleashed.

Cordially,

Stanley O. Ikenberry  
President  
American Council on Education

C. Peter Magrath  
President  
National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges

Nils Hasselmo  
President  
Association of American Universities

The other signatories to this letter include:

Lattie F. Coor—President, Arizona State University  
Ralph D. Feigin—President, Baylor College of Medicine  
Jehuda Reinharz—President, Brandeis University  
Sheila Blumstein—Interim President, Brown University  
David Baltimore—President, California Institute of Technology
The Honorable Tommy Thompson  
March 26, 2001

Page 4

John L. Hennessy—President, Stanford University  
Karen R. Hitchcock—President, University at Albany- The State University of New York  
William R. Greiner—President, University at Buffalo-The State University of New York  
Shirley S. Kenny—President, State University of New York Health Science Center at Stony Brook  
Kenneth A. Shaw—Chancellor and President, Syracuse University

David W. Adamany—President, Temple University  
Ray M. Bowen—President, Texas A&M University  
J. Jay Noren—President, Texas A&M University Health Science Center  
John DiBiaggio—President, Tufts University  
Scott S. Cowen—President, Tulane University

W. Ann Reynolds—President, University of Alabama at Birmingham  
Peter Likins—President, The University of Arizona  
John White—Chancellor, University of Arkansas at Fayetteville  
Richard C. Atkinson—President, University of California System  
Robert M. Berdahl—Chancellor, University of California, Berkeley

Larry N. Vanderhoef—Chancellor, University of California, Davis  
Ralph J. Cicerone—Chancellor, University of California, Irvine  
Albert Carnesale—Chancellor, University of California, Los Angeles  
Raymond L. Orbach—Chancellor, University of California, Riverside  
Robert C. Dynes—Chancellor, University of California, San Diego

J. Michael Bishop—Chancellor, University of California, San Francisco  
Henry T. Yang—Chancellor, University of California, Santa Barbara  
M.R.C. Greenwood—Chancellor, University of California, Santa Cruz  
Don Michael Randel—President, University of Chicago  
Joseph A. Steger—President, University of Cincinnati

Elizabeth Hoffman—President, University of Colorado System  
Richard L. Byyny—Chancellor, University of Colorado at Boulder  
James H. Shore—Chancellor, University of Colorado Health Sciences Center  
Charles E. Young—President, University of Florida  
Michael F. Adams—President, University of Georgia  
Kenneth P. Mortimer—President and Chancellor, University of Hawaii at Manoa
The Honorable Tommy Thompson  
March 26, 2001
Page 5

James Stukel—President, University of Illinois  
Sylvia Manning—Chancellor, University of Illinois at Chicago  
Michael Aiken—Chancellor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Mary Sue Coleman—President, University of Iowa  
Charles T. Wethington—President, University of Kentucky  

Emery Wilson—Dean, University of Kentucky College of Medicine  
David J. Ramsay—President, University of Maryland, Baltimore  
Freeman A. Hrabowski—President, University of Maryland Baltimore County  
Clayton D. Mote, Jr.—President, University of Maryland, College Park  
Stuart D. Cook—President, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey  

Ralph J. Faudree—Interim President, University of Memphis  
Edward T. Foote, II—President, University of Miami  
Lee C. Bollinger—President, University of Michigan  
Mark G. Yudof—President, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities  
Richard L. Wallace—Chancellor, University of Missouri, Columbia  

Dennis Smith—President, University of Nebraska  
Harvey Perlman—Interim Chancellor, University of Nebraska—Lincoln  
Harold M. Maurer—Chancellor, University of Nebraska Medical Center  
Stephen McFarlane—Interim President, University of Nevada—Reno  
James C. Moeser—Chancellor, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  

David B. Frohnmayer—President, University of Oregon  
Judith Rodin—President, University of Pennsylvania  
Mark A. Nordenberg—Chancellor, University of Pittsburgh  
Thomas H. Jackson—President, University of Rochester  
James W. Abbott—President, University of South Dakota  

Judy L. Genshaft—President, University of South Florida  
Steven B. Sample—President, University of Southern California  
Richard L. McCormick—President, University of Washington  
John D. Wiley—Chancellor, University of Wisconsin, Madison  
Kermit L. Hall—President, Utah State University  

E. Gordon Gee—Chancellor, Vanderbilt University  
Eugene P. Trani—President, Virginia Commonwealth University  
V. Lane Rawlins—President, Washington State University  
Mark S. Wrighton—Chancellor, Washington University in St. Louis  
Irvin D. Reid—President, Wayne State University  
Richard C. Levin—President, Yale University