

The Massachusetts Society for Medical Research, Inc.

FOUNDED 1953

November 26, 2003

The Editors
The Boston Globe
P.O. Box 2378
Boston, MA 02107

Dear Editors:

The Massachusetts Society for Medical Research is disappointed that the economic stimulus bill recently passed by the Legislature did not include the sections supporting stem cell research. Encouraging stem cell research in Massachusetts would boost our economy and truly further the potential for critical medical breakthroughs

California already endorses stem cell research. North Carolina is working on it now, as is the European Union. Massachusetts has always led in the medical research arena, drawing the best thinkers and those who support them. To turn away from stem cell research erodes our image as a state at the forefront of medical developments; it shakes the confidence of creative thinkers.

Ethical issues surrounded organ transplantation; they surrounded *in vitro* fertilization. Both techniques are now common procedures, saving lives and helping couples conceive. Our citizens' concerns about stem cells need to be heard and incorporated into appropriate safeguards, just as our codes of ethics continue to evolve with respect to these two procedures. Equally, however, we need to be concerned about our fellow citizens with spinal cord injuries, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, and other medical conditions, who will benefit greatly if stem cell research may proceed. Massachusetts can play a vital role in this progress.

We urge the Legislature to support stem cell research legislation when they return to session next year.

Sincerely,

Alan B. Dittrich, Ph.D.
President