

## **NEW CONGRESS SURVEY: 2 OUT OF 3 AMERICANS WANT ACTION IN JANUARY ON STEM CELL RESEARCH**

*Steadily Growing, Bipartisan Support for Stem Cell Research Now Up to 66 Percent Level;  
More Than Three Out of Five Americans Want Congress to Overturn Any Stem-Cell Veto By Bush.*

**WASHINGTON/D.C.///January 4, 2007///**More than two out of three Americans (68 percent) – including 69 percent of independents, 52 percent of evangelical Christians and 69 percent of Roman Catholics – want the new Congress to take action “in its first 100 hours” to expand federal support for stem cell research, according to a major new national opinion survey conducted by Opinion Research Corporation (ORC) for the nonprofit and nonpartisan Civil Society Institute (CSI) think tank, which has been polling on this topic for more three years.

The CSI survey also shows that more than three out of five Americans (63 percent) say that “if the new Congress passes a bill that expands stem cell research, and President Bush vetoes that bill,” then Congress should overturn the Bush veto. Only a third of Americans disagree, with fewer than one in five (19 percent) saying “definitely no” to a veto-overturn vote by Congress.

Another key finding: A steadily growing number of Americans support stem cell research, up from 63 percent nearly two years ago in February 2005 and 60 percent in June 2004 (immediately after the death of former President Ronald Reagan). Today, 66 percent of Americans, when asked the same unaided question about stem cell research that CSI also posed in 2004 and 2005, say that they support stem cell research, with just 29 percent opposed and under one in five Americans (19 percent) strongly opposed. The growing ranks of stem-cell research supporters now span every major demographic category, including 52 percent of Republicans, 51 percent of evangelical Christians, 59 percent of Roman Catholics, 59 percent of Independents and 81 percent of Democrats.

Pam Solo, president and founder, Civil Society Institute, and co-author of the new book, *The Promise and Politics of Stem Cell Research* (Praeger Publishing, 2007) said: **“With the incoming U.S. Congress vowing to take up stem cell research as one of its first orders of business in January 2007, it is very clear most Americans want the new Congress to expand stem cell research and also to turn back the expected veto from President George Bush. But politicians on Capitol Hill need to look very closely at these findings: Democrats and Republicans should expect a backlash if they simply play politics with stem cell research and deliver nothing but wedge-politics rhetoric and eventual deadlock.”**

Graham Hueber, senior researcher, Opinion Research Corporation, said: **“What is striking here is the steady growth over time in the broad-based support for stem cell research. More and more Republicans, Independents, evangelical Christians and Roman Catholics are helping to create a broad bipartisan consensus on the need for more federal support for stem cell research. In fact, Republicans were found to be the group most likely to have switched their views to favoring stem cell research.”**

Gail Pressberg, senior fellow, Civil Society Institute, and co-author of *The Promise and Politics of Stem Cell Research*, said: **“We expect these survey findings to help inform the debate this on**

**Capitol Hill in the coming days, weeks and months. The notion that there is some kind of large and well-defined ‘anti-stem cell bloc’ out there that elected officials need to fear is a hoax. To the contrary, what is very clear in our latest poll is that Americans are looking for action on broader stem cell research at the federal level and that they aren’t going to be satisfied with excuses and more classic Washington, D.C. stalling tactics.”**

### **OTHER KEY SURVEY FINDINGS**

- Nearly two out three Americans (65 percent) of Americans want bipartisan action on stem cell reform. The roughly two thirds of Americans -- including 51 percent of Republicans, two thirds of Roman Catholics and 61 percent of evangelical Christians -- said they would be concerned about the “gridlock” in Washington “if the new Congress could not find a way to work together to expand stem cell research and find more funding for it.” Only a third said they would be unconcerned and just 17 percent “not concerned at all.” The concern about partisan gridlock on stem cell reform also extended to 67 percent of independents and 78 percent of Democrats.
- Action by Congress to overturn a Bush veto on stem cell research would be supported by 51 percent of evangelical Christians, 59 percent of Roman Catholics, 43 percent of Republicans, 59 percent of Independents and 84 percent of Democrats.
- Almost three out of four Americans (72 percent) say that “stem cell research is too important for Congress and the White House to ‘play politics’ with it by using it as a ‘wedge’ issue” to appeal to targeted segments of the population. One out of four Americans do not feel this way, with only 11 percent disagreeing strongly that stem cell research should not become a political football. The desire to keep stem cell research above politics was shared by 64 percent of Republicans, 65 percent of evangelical Christians, 69 percent of Roman Catholics, 71 percent of Independents and 81 percent of Democrats.
- Republicans were most heavily represented (18 percent) among the ranks of Americans who have changed their view from “opposing stem cell research to supporting stem cell research”. This group of switchers also includes 14 percent of evangelical Christians, 11 percent of Roman Catholics, 10 percent of independents and 13 percent of Democrats.
- The number one reason for people switching to support for stem cell research is being “persuaded by supporters of stem cell research” (35 percent). This factor came in ahead of an illness suffered by themselves or someone they know (29 percent) and “you are not comfortable with religious leaders telling scientists how to do their job” (20 percent).
- When respondents are provided information about stem cell research, the level of support rises to 74 percent and the level of opposition falls to 24 percent. With this question, the level of support includes 54 percent of Republicans, 56 percent of evangelicals, 76 percent of independents, and 90 percent of Democrats.

- Nearly four out of five Americans (79 percent) either personally have suffered from a serious illness that might benefit from stem cell research's search for cures or know a family member or friend who has been so afflicted.

For full survey findings, go to <http://www.civilsocietyinstitute.org> on the Web.

## **SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

Results are based on telephone interviews conducted among a sample of 1,031 adults (516 men and 515 women) age 18 and over, living in private households, in the continental United States. Interviewing by ORC was completed during the period of December 15-18, 2006. Completed interviews of 1,031 adults were weighted by four variables: age, sex, geographic region, and race, to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total adult population. The margin of error at a 95 percent confidence level is plus or minus 3 percentage points for the sample of 1,031 adults. Smaller sub-groups will have larger error margins.

## **ABOUT CSI**

The nonprofit and nonpartisan Civil Society Institute (CSI) is a think tank that serves as a catalyst for change by creating problem-solving interactions among people, and between communities, government and business that can help to improve society. Stem cell research is one of the major issue areas focused on by the Civil Society Institute. CSI is on the Web at <http://www.civilsocietyinstitute.org>.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** A streaming audio replay of the Civil Society Institute news event will be available on the Web at <http://www.civilsocietyinstitute.org> as of 6 p.m. ET on January 4, 2007.