



CARAVAN<sup>®</sup>

# AMERICAN VIEWS ON STEM CELL RESEARCH IN THE WAKE OF THE DEATH OF RONALD REAGAN

*Prepared for:*

Results for America

*June 16, 2004*

OPINION RESEARCH CORPORATION



DETAILED TABULATIONS OF CARAVAN

AMERICAN VIEWS ON STEM CELL  
RESEARCH IN THE WAKE OF THE DEATH  
OF RONALD REAGAN

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STUDY #  
713248

*Prepared by:*

OPINION RESEARCH CORPORATION

*Princeton, New Jersey*

*Poll on "American Views on Stem Cell Research in the Wake of the Death of Ronald Reagan"*

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NOTE: PERCENTAGES MAY NOT ADD TO 100% DUE TO ROUNDING

\* INDICATES A RESPONSE OF LESS THAN 0.5%

Base = 1,017 Adults 18 years old or older

B1 Do you consider yourself to be liberal, moderate, or conservative?

**23%** LIBERAL  
**35%** MODERATE  
**38%** CONSERVATIVE  
  
**4%** DON'T KNOW/NONE OF THESE

B2 What is your religion? [DO NOT READ LIST. RECORD ONE ANSWER]

**39** PROTESTANT  
%  
**23** CATHOLIC  
%  
JEWISH  
**2%**  
\* MUSLIM  
**16** OTHER [SPECIFY]  
%  
**16** NONE  
%  
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED  
**4%**

B3 Would you describe yourself as either a fundamentalist or an evangelical Christian, or would you not describe yourself that way?

**22%** FUNDAMENTALIST OR EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN  
**64%** NEITHER FUNDAMENTALIST OR EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN  
**6%** CATHOLIC, JEWISH OR MUSLIM  
  
**8%** DON'T KNOW

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B4 Please tell me whether you, a family member, or a close personal friend has ever suffered from any of the following diseases or conditions. [READ AND ROTATE ITEMS. RECORD AS MANY AS APPLY]

	<i>Self/Family/Friend (net)</i>	<u>You, yourself</u>	<u>A family member</u>	A close personal <u>friend</u>	<u>DON'T KNOW/NONE OF THESE</u>
Cancer	<b>73%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>27%</b>
Heart disease	<b>56%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>44%</b>
Alzheimer's disease	<b>28%</b>	-	<b>24%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>72%</b>
Parkinson's disease	<b>17%</b>	*	<b>11%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>83%</b>
Juvenile diabetes	<b>16%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>84%</b>
Spinal cord injuries	<b>13%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>87%</b>

B5 On the whole, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose medical research that uses stem cells from human embryos?

- 34** Strongly support  
%
- 26** Somewhat support  
%
- 11** Somewhat oppose  
%
- 16** Strongly oppose  
%
- 13** DON'T KNOW  
%

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B6 I'm going to read you a brief description of embryonic stem cell research, and then get your reaction. Embryonic stem cells are special cells that can develop into every type of cell in the human body. The stem cells are extracted from frozen embryos in fertility clinics, donated by couples who no longer want or need the embryo. This process destroys the embryo. These stem cells can then reproduce on their own, creating what is called a "line" of stem cells that many researchers can work with. Scientists believe that there is a good chance that stem cells can be developed into cures or treatments for diseases such as cancer, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, juvenile diabetes, and spinal cord injuries.

Having heard this description, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose medical research that uses stem cells from human embryos?

**41** Strongly support  
%  
**32** Somewhat support  
%  
**10** Somewhat oppose  
%  
**14** Strongly oppose  
%  
  
DON'T KNOW  
**4%**

B7 Were you aware that President Ronald Reagan, who just died, was afflicted with Alzheimer's disease?

**95** YES  
%  
NO  
**4%**  
  
\* DON'T KNOW

B8 Would you be more or less likely to support stem cell research if you knew that experts think it may hold the key to curing the Alzheimer's disease that afflicted President Reagan? Would you say you would be . . . [READ LIST. RECORD ONE ANSWER]

**39** Much more likely to support stem cell research  
%  
**33** Somewhat more likely to support stem cell research

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<b>%</b>	Somewhat less likely to support stem cell research
<b>7%</b>	
<b>11</b>	Much less likely to support stem cell research
<b>%</b>	
<b>11</b>	DON'T KNOW
<b>%</b>	

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B9 Do you support former First Lady Nancy Reagan's call for the White House to lift restrictions on stem cell research in an effort to find a cure for Alzheimer's disease and other grave illnesses? Would you say you . . . [READ LIST. RECORD ONE ANSWER]

**46** Strongly support  
%  
**28** Somewhat support  
%  
Somewhat oppose  
**8%**  
**13** Strongly oppose  
%  
DON'T KNOW  
**5%**

B10 Would you support expanded federal support for more medical research, including stem cell research? Would you say you would . . . [READ LIST. RECORD ONE ANSWER]

**43** Strongly support  
%  
**31** Somewhat support  
%  
Somewhat oppose  
**9%**  
**13** Strongly oppose  
%  
DON'T KNOW  
**4%**

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B11 A variety of groups and individuals have been involved in public discussion of stem cell research. Please tell me how much you would trust the information on stem cell research provided by each of the following groups or individuals mentioned. Would you say a lot, some, not too much, or not at all? [READ AND ROTATE ITEMS]

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not too much</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>DON'T KNOW</u>
Nancy Reagan	<b>36%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>3%</b>
Health organizations such as the American Medical Association and the Alzheimer's Association	<b>54%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>2%</b>
Mary Tyler Moore, chairwoman of the Juvenile Diabetes Association	<b>31%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>5%</b>
Christopher Reeve	<b>39%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>4%</b>
Michael J. Fox	<b>36%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>5%</b>
Religious leaders	<b>13%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>5%</b>
George W. Bush	<b>20%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>3%</b>

## **AMERICAN VIEWS ON STEM CELL RESEARCH IN THE WAKE OF THE DEATH OF RONALD REAGAN**

### **SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

The first public opinion poll since the death of President Ronald Reagan to assess the impact of his passing on the views of Americans about stem cell research finds the following:

- A strong majority of Americans support Nancy Reagan's call for the Bush White House to lift restrictions on stem cell research that might help to find cures for such ailments as the Alzheimer's disease that afflicted the recently deceased President Ronald Reagan, as well as other illnesses such as diabetes, Parkinson's, heart disease and Multiple Sclerosis. By a margin of 74 percent to 21 percent, Americans (including 79 percent of moderates and 62 percent of conservatives) say that they back the former First Lady's call for more stem cell research flexibility.
- Nancy Reagan's clout on stem cell research issues is now much greater since the death of her husband. The former first lady is seen as very or somewhat credible on stem cell research issues by 80 percent of Americans, including 77 percent of conservatives, 81 percent of moderates and 74 percent of fundamentalist or evangelical Christians. This reflects a possible uptick in the public's perception of her credibility on this issue; a Civil Society Institute (CSI) survey asking the same question in 18 key states in March 2004 found that only 65 percent of Americans recognized Nancy Reagan as a credible spokesperson on stem cell research issues. Today, Nancy Reagan on a national basis trails only major medical groups (88 percent) in terms of being able to speak out with authority on stem cell research issues.
- The death of Ronald Reagan is likely to alter the course of the national dialogue about stem cell research. When asked "would you be more or less likely to support stem cell research if you knew that experts think it may hold the key to curing the Alzheimer's disease that afflicted President Reagan," 72 percent of Americans said they would be more likely to support stem cell research, including 76 percent of moderates, 64 percent of conservatives and 62 percent of fundamentalist or evangelical Christians.
- Overall support for stem cell research continues its steady pattern of growth. When asked for their initial views with no prompting of medical research that "uses stem cells from human embryos," Americans supported it by a margin of 60 percent-26 percent. This reflects major growth in support from an earlier 2001 survey asking the same question found a support level of 48 percent-43 percent.
- Support for stem cell research is rapidly approaching bipartisan status. The initial question posed about "embryonic stem cell research" found strong majority support among liberals (75 percent) and moderates (67 percent), with conservatives (47 percent) hovering just under the majority level. When the potential benefits of stem cell research were explained in a separate question to those polled, the overall support level rose to 72 percent versus 23 percent, including backing from moderates at 81 percent and conservatives at 60 percent.

- Nearly three in four Americans support expanded federal support for stem cell research. A strong 74 percent of those polled expressed their backing for more resources for stem cell research, including 80 percent of moderates and 62 percent of conservatives. Moderates lined up for additional stem cell research by a margin of 80 percent - 17 percent, while conservatives supported the proposition by a margin of 62 percent - 32 percent.
- Nearly all Americans (95 percent) were aware of the fact that President Ronald Reagan was afflicted with Alzheimer's disease prior to his death.

Following is a detailed analysis of the survey questions.

### **Support for Stem Cell Research**

- ◆ By more than a 2-1 margin (60%-26%), Americans support medical research which uses stem cells from human embryos. One in three strongly support stem cell research (34%), while 16% strongly oppose it.
  - A plurality of conservatives support stem cell research (47% support-38% oppose), while large majorities of moderates (67%) and liberals (75%) are supportive.
  - A plurality of fundamentalist or evangelical Christians support stem cell research (46%-40%).
  - Support is slightly higher among men (64%) than women (57%), although solid majorities of both support this research.
  - Americans in the Northeast are the strongest supporters (71%), although a large majority of Americans in the rest of the country support stem cell research as well (58%).
  - Support is significantly higher in metropolitan areas (63%) than rural ones (51%).
  - Support for stem cell research rises sharply with educational attainment, from 53% among those with a high school or less education, to 69% among Americans with a college degree.
- ◆ After being read a description of the potential benefits of stem cell research, support increases to 72%-23%; strong support increases to 41%.
  - Support increases across the board, but jumps particularly among those in the South (+15%) and residents of rural areas (+15%).
  - About six in ten of both conservatives (60%) and fundamentalists/evangelicals (59%) support medical research which uses stem cells after hearing of the potential benefits. Support among moderates increases to 81%.
  - After learning of the potential benefits of stem cell research, at least two in three Americans in all demographic groups support it.

- ◆ Asked if they would be more or less likely to support stem cell research if they knew experts think “it may hold the key to curing the Alzheimer’s disease that afflicted President Reagan”, 72% say they would be more likely to support it, while only 17% would be less likely; 39% would be much more likely to support stem cell research.
  - Nearly two in three conservatives (64%) and fundamentalists/evangelicals (62%) would be more likely to support stem cell research if it could hold the key to curing Alzheimer’s disease which afflicted President Reagan. In addition, 76% of moderates would be more likely, as well as 80% of liberals.
  - At least two in three Americans in all demographic groups are more likely to support stem cell research.
  
- ◆ Three in four Americans (74%) support “Nancy Reagan’s call for the White House to lift restrictions on stem cell research in an effort to find a cure for Alzheimer’s disease and other grave illnesses.” Nearly half (46%) strongly support Mrs. Reagan’s position, while only 21% oppose it.
  - A solid majority of both conservatives (62%) and fundamentalists/evangelicals (62%) support Nancy Reagan’s call to lift restrictions, as do 79% of moderates and 87% of liberals.
  - At least two in three Americans in all demographic groups support Mrs. Reagan’s position.
  
- ◆ Three in four Americans (74%) also support expanded federal support for more medical research, including stem cell research, while only 22% are opposed. Forty-three percent strongly support expanded federal support.
  - Nearly two in three fundamentalists/evangelicals (65%) and conservatives (62%) support expanded federal support, as well as 80% of moderates and 88% of liberals.
  - More than two in three Americans across all demographic lines support expanded federal support for more medical research, including stem cell research.

### **Stem Cell Research Information Sources**

- ◆ Respondents were asked how much they would trust various sources of information about stem cell research. Health organizations such as the American Medical Association, and the Alzheimer’s Association topped the list, with 88% saying they have a lot or some trust in the information about stem cell research from these groups. Following are Nancy Reagan (80%), Christopher Reeve (77%), Mary Tyler Moore, who is the chairwoman of the Juvenile Diabetes Association (75%) and Michael J. Fox (75%). President George W. Bush (56%) and religious leaders (52%) are ranked lower.
  - More than eight in ten Americans in every demographic and ideological groups trust the information health organizations provide about stem cell research issues.
  - Three in four Americans across all demographic categories have a lot or some trust in the information on cell stem research provided by Nancy Reagan. Aside from health organizations, she is the most trusted source among conservatives.

- Christopher Reeve, Mary Tyler Moore and Michael J. Fox are all trusted by at least two in three Americans in all demographic and ideological groups.
- Trust in President Bush is closely related to ideology – 70% of conservatives trust the information provided by him on this issue, compared with 56% of moderates and only 34% of liberals. Seven in ten fundamentalists/evangelicals (70%) trust him as well. Even among conservatives and fundamentalists/evangelicals, however, higher percentages trust Nancy Reagan.
- Seven in ten fundamentalists/evangelicals (70%) trust the information provided about stem cell research by religious leaders. A majority of conservatives (58%) and moderates (57%) trust them as well, although only 37% of liberals do.

### **President Reagan and Alzheimer's Disease**

- ◆ Huge majorities of Americans across the board are aware Ronald Reagan had Alzheimer's disease, including 80% of 18-24 year olds, the least-informed group.

### **Methodology**

*These results are based upon telephone surveys conducted by Opinion Research Corporation among a national probability sample of 1,017 adults 18 and older living in private households in the continental United States. The survey was conducted June 10-13, 2004. The margin of error among all adults is plus or minus three percentage points.*