



In The News

stem cell research
& development



Stemagen CEO Writes Letter to Governor Schwarzenegger Regarding Senate Bill 1260

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September 12, 2006

Hon. Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814
Fax: 916-445-4633

RE: SENATE BILL 1260

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger,

I am writing today to urge your veto on SB 1260, a measure that runs contrary to California's progressive history of treating women fairly and equitably under the law. As the CEO of an embryonic stem cell research company, Stemagen, Inc., I can tell you while SB 1260 may be well meaning, it would in fact be a "poison pill" to Californians engaged in one of the most promising types of embryonic stem cell research.

By prohibiting women from being compensated fairly for donating their eggs for this research, SB 1260 would make it all but impossible to acquire the raw materials necessary to realize the full therapeutic potential of embryonic stem cells, one that may provide desperately needed treatments for severe degenerative diseases like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

The inequity, of course, exists in that here in California and across the United States, men are frequently compensated for making sperm donations for many kinds of research.

The highly negative consequences of passing a bill such as this can clearly be seen based on recent events in Massachusetts. For several years, Massachusetts had been a leader in the most advanced area of embryonic stem cell research, nuclear transfer (featured in a cover story for *Scientific American* in January 2002). That all changed in May 2005 when the Massachusetts Legislature overrode a veto by Governor Romney of a bill similar to SB 1260 (Massachusetts' Senate No. 2039) and it became law. Since then, even prestigious research institutions such as Harvard have had no success in recruiting egg donors for this type of research and, not surprisingly, the company that performed some of the most important early research in this area has moved its headquarters from Massachusetts (to California). If California makes the same mistake as Massachusetts, our ability to advance this research will no doubt suffer the same unfortunate consequences.

I strongly urge you to veto this bill and join the American Society of Reproductive Medicine (ASRM), the nation's leading advocate for thousands of medical and laboratory professionals that treat infertile couples, as well as the International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR), the world's leading advocate for stem cell research, in opposing a bill that treats women unfairly, and in so doing, severely hinders a very promising type of embryonic stem cell research here in California.

Sincerely,
Samuel H. Wood, M.D., Ph.D.

For more information, please contact:
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