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## **Stem cell amendment could receive new restrictions, Legislature says**

**Kim Kozlowski / The Detroit News**

*Lansing* -- The battle over embryonic stem cell research in Michigan ignited again Thursday with a six-bill package introduced by Republican lawmakers to set up rules for researchers.

The main bill proposes to add specifics to the controversial constitutional amendment that voters approved in November to allow research into potential therapies and possible cures.

Sen. Tom George, R-Kalamazoo, who introduced one of the bills, said the package sets up parameters.

"There is a need to establish some clarity and get rid of the ambiguities," said George, a potential candidate for governor in 2010. He led opposition to Proposal 2.

Stem cell supporters countered that Thursday's effort would undermine the will of the people, who approved the constitutional amendment to lift restrictions on stem cell research by a 53 percent to 47 percent margin.

"They couldn't stop it at the ballot box, so they're trying to stop it by throwing a regulatory barrier at the research," said former Congressman Joe Schwarz, who was co-chairman of the group that worked to pass the constitutional amendment.

Opponents have proposed numerous additions to the amendment, among them several definitions to the language in the constitutional amendment.

For instance, the amendment says embryos created in fertility clinics may be used for stem cell research if they are not suitable for implantation. The proposed bill defines "not suitable" to mean the embryo exhibits characteristics that "make successful implantation and gestation of the human embryo less than 50 percent likely."

The legislation also would require an annual report, ban transportation of cloned embryos into the state and set penalties for violations.

Additionally, it includes regulations for fertility clinics, where embryos are created for infertile couples and sometimes donated to scientists for stem cell research if they are no longer needed.

The legislation is unnecessary and confusing to the public, said Sheri Mark, president of Michigan Citizens for Stem Cell Research and Cures.

"This bill does not help make anything any clearer for anybody," she said. "It's really trying to muddy the waters and give misinformation again to the Michigan public."

George disagreed. "This is creating the framework to implement Proposal 2," he said.

Work group meetings will be held over the summer