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## Education Is Key to Stem Cell Research

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Some bold folks are standing up to the vocal opposition that continues to stymie embryonic stem cell research in Michigan. And they're doing it with the best possible weapon: education.

Calling themselves Michigan Citizens for Stem Cell Research & Cures, a group of politicians and scientists intend to offer state residents the truth and the hope of this science to counter the noise from the religious right that has to date prevailed in setting Michigan public policy.

Stem cell research holds the best possibility for providing cures to some of the most debilitating diseases and must be allowed to proceed here for both moral and economic reasons.

Morally, there is no point in stopping the research -- which will proceed elsewhere -- in the name of "rescuing" embryos that are otherwise destined for the dustbins of fertility clinics. Nor should lifesaving research that could cure actual human beings be derailed in the interest of "saving" potential life.

Economically, this state is looking for avenues of diversification away from the faltering auto industry. With some of the best researchers in the world at its universities and corporations, Michigan should be the leader in the biosciences. Instead, as other states pour billions into this research, Michigan law severely restricts the study of embryonic cells. A recent move to spend \$5 million on umbilical cord research is a worthy investment but should not distract from the way this state stands in the way of progress.

Bills in both houses of the Legislature would improve the research climate in the Great Lakes State. If this group can help people understand its importance, its value and the way it actually works, then there's still a chance that some of the cures can be found here.

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