



This is a printer friendly version of an article from **Lansing State Journal**. To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

Published January 30, 2006

## **Stem cells: Lifting state restrictions on research can help economy**

A Lansing State Journal editorial

With all the talk about retooling Michigan's economy for the 21st century, one might hope Republican leaders would rally to Gov. Jennifer Granholm's call for ending state restrictions on stem-cell research. No such luck.

One national study estimates that, annually, \$440 million is invested in stem-cell research - money Michigan isn't getting due to state law. But the Republican response to Granholm's idea? Tepid.

Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema, R-Wyoming, says he's not persuaded by Granholm's proposal, which she pitched during last week's State of the State address.

Gubernatorial candidate Dick DeVos wouldn't even venture a viewpoint.

At least House Speaker Craig DeRoche, R-Novi, said lawmakers would review Granholm's proposal, though it's generally believed Republicans won't allow the vote to go to the full House.

These politicians are playing to the emotions and rhetoric of the anti-abortion crowd. In doing so, they stymie the chances for expanded stem-cell research, which holds great promises for finding cures to some of humankind's more debilitating diseases.

In a meeting last week with the LSJ Editorial Board, University of Michigan President Mary Sue Coleman described current state law as "stifling" to stem-cell research. U-M does have ongoing stem-cell research. But it's severely limited by state law.

As U-M officials explain, the state has a ban on making new stem cell lines. The university can only use stem cell lines created in other states. No wonder Nature Magazine says Michigan has one of the most restrictive stem-cell laws in the country. No wonder Michigan will continue having trouble attracting and retaining top-notch talent in the life sciences, if such laws remain on the books.

Opponents of stem-cell research claim the promise of this research is a fallacy; that the research has failed to find medical cures. That's like saying that since we haven't found evidence of extraterrestrial life, the rest of the universe must be dead.

There are numerous science-based indications that embryonic stem-cell research will someday lead to new treatments, and cures, for such devastating diseases as Alzheimer's and juvenile diabetes.

Thousands of human embryos are discarded each year as "medical waste." Rather than throwing them out, why not use them in a real pro-life way, by giving researchers the tools to better understand human disease?

Even the Republican-controlled U.S. House last year broke with President Bush and voted to lift federal restrictions on stem-cell research. We'd urge Republican lawmakers in Lansing to choose a similar path, and help end a "stifling" state law.

---

Copyright 2006 Lansing State Journal Use of this site signifies your agreement to the Terms of Service (updated 12.20.02)

[\[Back\]](#)