



July 13, 2008

## **No valid reason to oppose research**

The article about state Rep. Joe Hune, R-Hamburg Township ("Lawmaker opposes stem cell plan," July 8), contained several inaccuracies regarding stem cell research.

Scientists around the world agree that embryonic stem cell research has enormous potential to unlock cures to deadly diseases like cancer, juvenile diabetes and Parkinson's, and gives hope that people crippled by spinal cord injuries may walk again.

The Michigan law that bans research on embryos was passed in 1978 as a result of fear of a new science, in vitro fertilization. The same folks who today oppose embryonic stem cell research tried to stop a science that has provided hundreds of thousands of babies to couples who were unable to conceive normally. The first embryonic stem cell was isolated in 1998, 20 years after the above- mentioned law was passed.

In November, the voters of Michigan will have the opportunity to amend this law to allow couples to donate their unused and unwanted embryos for research. The law banning human cloning will remain in place, despite the propaganda to the contrary. As the law stands, it allows the destruction of these embryos but forbids their donation for an excellent cause — curing diseases and injuries for thousands of suffering people. How does that make sense?

A few points to consider: Michigan is one of five states that forbids research on embryos. As the rest of the country expands its life science industries, employing thousands of scientists and support personnel, Michigan can't participate in this remarkable science.

The 4- or 5-day-old embryo that is being considered for research is the size of the period at the end of this sentence. It will be discarded as medical waste instead of donated to find cures.

As long as there is a vocal and well-financed minority out there opposing this potentially valuable research, Michigan faces the risk of remaining a backward, sorry place, and thousands of people will continue to suffer and die needlessly.

**Marilyn Hysen**

Howell