

MIRS

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Stem Cell Close To Ballot

Supporters of stem cell research are confident they will see a ballot proposal this November, according to a University of Michigan professor.

Sean **MORRISON**, Associate Professor of Cell and Development Biology at the University of Michigan, said the petition for this proposal is still collecting signatures but they are well ahead of their goal.

Morrison and Ed **RIVET**, Legislative Director for Right for Life of Michigan, agreed that Michigan's restrictions on stem cell research are greater than in any other state. But that's where their agreement ended. This proposal reduces restrictions for researchers, a move that currently has broad bipartisan support at the federal level.

Michigan law restricts scientists from deriving new stem cell lines, as a "social justice issue", according to Morrison, considering that current stem cell lines are not ethnically diverse.

Rivet responded that the frozen embryos in fertility clinics do not represent a diverse population either, and Michigan scientists have the option of getting more diverse stem cell lines from other states, a process not restricted by the current law.

One audience member condemned Rivet for claiming that stem cell researchers were in it for the profit. The physician said that the "biggest concern for the people in the room is patients."

Morrison concurred saying that it's "not about the money."

He concluded the debate by warning the audience not to be scared off by the "science fiction scenarios," saying that current law is "not against research, it's against family values."