



1025 Vermont Avenue, NW • Suite 1120  
Washington, DC 20005

*Phone:*  
202.638.4101 • 800.850.4726

*Fax:*  
202.638.7257

*E-mail:*  
info@parkinsonsaction.org

*Website:*  
www.parkinsonsaction.org

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April 6, 2007

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
US Senate  
528 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

We recognize that you are hearing from many patient advocacy and research organizations refuting a belief that adult stem cells have been used in treating or curing a long list of ailments, conditions and diseases. As representatives of more than one million people with Parkinson's disease and their families, our organizations would like to emphasize as the Senate debates S. 5, the Stem Cell Research and Enhancement Act, that we exist today because we have NOT found a cure or adequate treatments for Parkinson's using adult stem cells or otherwise. Furthermore, Dr. Elias Zerhouni, Director of the National Institutes of Health and President Bush's top scientist, when recently testifying before the Senate declared that the idea that adult stem cells hold as much promise as embryonic stem cells "doesn't hold scientific water."

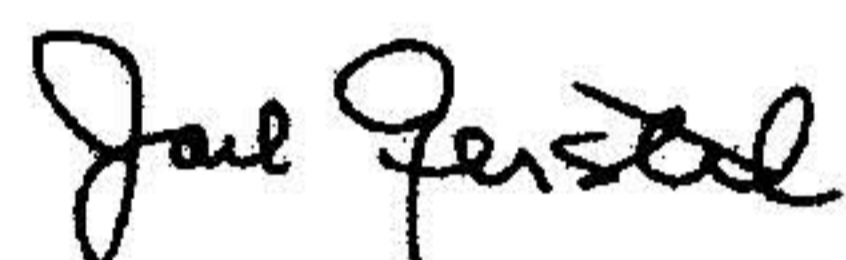
Because the unique promise of embryonic stem cell research is critical to advancing understanding of and treatments for Parkinson's disease, the Parkinson's community is dedicated to expanding federal funding for embryonic stem cell research. As you may know, Parkinson's occurs when dopamine producing neurons in the brain die. To this date, scientists have had more success in generating dopamine cells from human embryonic stem cells than any other type of stem cell, including adult, umbilical, or amniotic.

While replacement of these neurons may be one therapy resulting from additional embryonic stem cell research, other avenues of Parkinson's research will benefit from this legislation and expansion of the current policy. Researchers will be aided in studying the causes of Parkinson's, developing more accurate models to improve our understanding of the disease, and, ultimately, halting the unrelenting neurological degeneration and loss of quality of life for Parkinson's patients.

Opponents of S. 5 are using as ammunition the assertion that embryonic stem cell research is not needed in this country because many diseases, 72 of them, including Parkinson's, have been treated or cured with adult stem cells. This assertion is an absolute falsehood. If there were a therapy to adequately treat the symptoms or halt the progression of this unrelenting disease, the millions of Parkinson's patients, caregivers and their physicians would be pursuing that treatment right now.

The most respected scientists in our field view embryonic stem cells as an area of research that must be explored and one that our government must make a commitment to support. The Parkinson's community asks that you and your colleagues pass S. 5 and not accept any substitutes.

Sincerely,



Joel Gerstel  
American Parkinson Disease Association



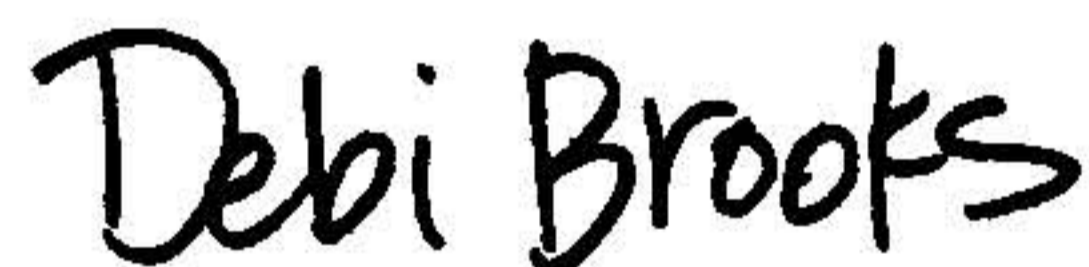
Jose Garcia-Pedrosa  
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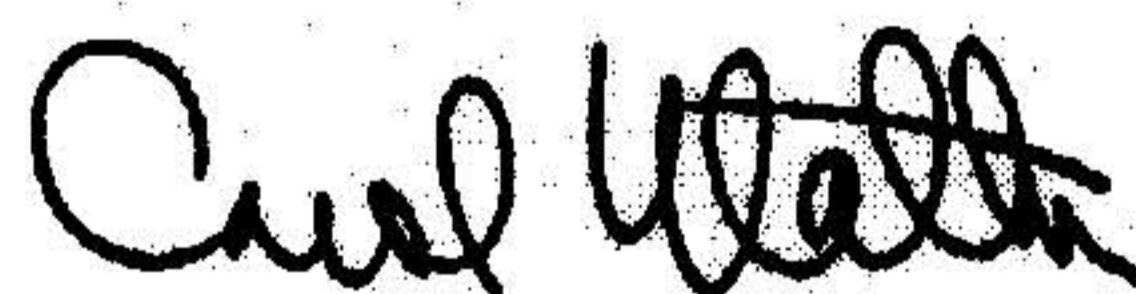
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