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## State Senate passes bills for adult stem cell research

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**The Associated Press**

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — The state Senate approved bills Thursday designed to encourage the creation of a network of stem cell banks for umbilical cords and adult stem cells, but Republicans rejected Democratic efforts to also lift restrictions on embryonic stem cell research in Michigan.

Democrats said embryonic stem cell research could help cure Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease, while Republicans voiced moral and ethical concerns over such research.

The bills promoting research using adult stem cells were passed on a 36-0 vote and likely will reach Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm's desk soon.

State law does not permit Michigan researchers to get embryos left over from fertility treatments in the state. State scientists can use embryonic stem cell lines from California, Illinois or other states with less restrictive laws, but those lines sometimes are patented by other researchers.

Sen. Gretchen Whitmer, D-East Lansing, tried to tie the legislation to Democratic legislation that would allow more embryonic stem cell research in Michigan. She criticized Republicans who, along with Right to Life of Michigan and the Michigan Catholic Conference, are opposed because it would allow human embryos to be destroyed to harvest their stem cells.

"It's OK to throw in-vitro embryos in the garbage, it's just not OK to do research on those embryos?" Whitmer said, arguing that embryos are left over from fertility treatments and would be disposed of anyway.

Republicans, however, countered that umbilical cord blood banks are a good start in Michigan.

Sen. Mike Goschka, R-Brant, said embryonic stem cell research is "the taking of human life. We must at some point demonstrate that we truly do believe in human life."

Democrats' efforts to lift restrictions on embryonic research failed 14-21 mostly along party lines, although one Republican — Sen. Shirley Johnson of Troy — joined Democrats and two Democrats — Sens. Jim Barcia of Bay City and Dennis Olshove of Warren — joined Republicans.

Sen. Ray Basham, D-Taylor, did not vote while Republican Sens. Beverly Hammerstrom of Temperance and Alan Sanborn of Richmond were absent.

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The stem cell bills are Senate Bills 1353-54.

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