

Voters approved embryonic stem cell research; lawmakers shouldn't subvert their intent

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Once the people speak on a matter by approving a ballot initiative, the issue ought to be settled. But that's not the case with embryonic stem cell research in Michigan.

Voters last year overwhelmingly passed a measure clearing away the legal obstacles for researchers here to use embryonic stem cells in their laboratories.

And yet opponents refuse to rest. They've introduced a bipartisan package of six bills in the state Legislature aimed at placing limits on the research. These bills are in committee scheduled for debate in the fall.

Two bills would saddle the in-vitro fertilization clinics that produce the embryonic stem cells with unprecedented reporting regulations and mandates for gathering information from patients. This will not only slow stem cell research, but also impact couples seeking in-vitro fertilization to get pregnant.

Supporters of the research rightly denounce the bills as an attempt to gut the intent of the people. It shouldn't be allowed to happen.

Opponents of embryonic stem cell research put up a vigorous fight against the ballot measure. But they lost.

Lawmakers have no right to hand them a victory in the Legislature that they didn't earn at the polls.

The practice of muting the impact of ballot referendums by loading them up with restrictive guidelines passed by the Legislature should end here.

Voters had a clear intent when they approved the research, and that intent shouldn't be subverted by lawmakers who disagree with the outcome.

Michigan needs to send a strong message that the stem cell issue is settled, and that the state's laboratories are open for this potentially life-saving research.

Opportunities are being lost due to the perception that the state remains ambiguous on embryonic stem cell research.