



MIRS Breaking News - Senate Passes Stem Cell Research Restrictions -- 12:20 p.m.

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Senate Passes Stem Cell Research Restrictions

After months of delay, the Senate today passed legislation placing restrictions on embryonic stem cell research.

The package shepherded by Sen. Tom **GEORGE** (R-Texas Twp.), who led the effort against Proposal 2 of 2008 that lifted the ban on such research, won the support of four Democrats. Sen. Bruce **PATTERSON** (R-Canton) voted no on the main bills of the package, SB 0647 sponsored by George, and SB 0649 sponsored by Sen. Roger **KAHN** (R-Saginaw).

Experts have testified that "we are tampering with the will of the people. We are going forth on a mission that thumbs our nose at the will of the people," Patterson said. "I, for one, cannot do that."

The other bills in the package are SB 0648, SB 0650, SB 0651 and SB 0652.

Sen. Jud **GILBERT** (R-Algonac) said the legislation was all about transparency and was not burdensome to researchers.

George, who is running for governor, said that the legislation clarifies Proposal 2, but does not throw up barriers on research, calling that idea "ludicrous." Penalties for violating research protocol are established. The bills are backed by Right to Life of Michigan, which opposed the amendment.

"This is reasonable and it is needed," he said.

George asked opponents where their amendments were trying to make legislation better.

"All I heard is no," he said.

The package passed out of George's Health Policy Committee in January (See ["Senate Panel Births Stem Cell Bills,"](#) 1/20/10). When it didn't come to the floor right away, George won an amendment requiring universities to report on their embryonic stem cell research activities in the Higher Education budget (See ["Higher Ed Budget Becomes Stem Cell Battleground,"](#) 3/11/10).

The Democratic-led House is not expected to take action, despite House Speaker Andy **DILLON**'s (D-Redford Twp.) opposition to Proposal 2. Dillon, who is running for governor, issued a strongly worded statement against the Senate's action:

"The people of Michigan rendered their verdict on Proposal 2 during the 2008 election when they voted to amend the state's Constitution. The Senate bills appear to be political in nature and ignore both the will of the people as well as the state's Constitution. The House is and will remain focused on addressing the state's jobs and fiscal crises."

Gov. Jennifer **GRANHOLM**, a strong backer of Proposal 2, is not expected to sign legislation if it comes to her desk.