



Stem Cell Ethics and Politics

Ethics of Embryonic Stem Cell Research

Is embryonic stem cell research **promising enough** to be federally funded? Does an embryo created through therapeutic cloning have the same rights as an embryo created through in vitro fertilization? The human embryo is **clearly alive and clearly human**, but does it afford the same rights as a fully developed fetus? U.S. law allows both abortion and in vitro fertilization (which often results in **embryo destruction**), so the current stance held by the government is that the embryo does not have the same rights as a fetus or adult. However, this viewpoint is not shared by many citizens.

Stem Cell Law

On August 9th, 2001, President George W. Bush announced that federal funds may be awarded for research using human embryonic stem cells if:

- ❖ The derivation process was initiated prior to August 9, 2001.
- ❖ The stem cells were derived from an embryo that was created for reproductive purposes and was no longer needed.
- ❖ Informed consent was obtained for the donation of the embryo and that donation must not have involved financial inducements

Resources: The National Institute of Health's Stem Cell Basics: <http://stemcells.nih.gov>
The Harvard Stem Cell Institute Glossary of Terms: <http://www.hsci.harvard.edu/glossary>



Harvard College Stem Cell Society

<http://hcs.harvard.edu/stemcell>

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