

On Monday, the *Indianapolis Star* endorsed federal funding for embryonic stem-cell research. You can read that editorial by clicking [here](#) .

Today, Congressman Pence sent the following letter to the *Star* in response to their editorial:

Dear Editor,

I read with great interest your June 21 editorial, "Stem Cells Offer Glimmer of Hope" and fear your readers may glean from it the idea that President Bush and many Republicans in Congress oppose federal funding of all stem-cell research.

To the contrary, I, along with many of my pro-life Republican colleagues, support NIH funding for stem-cell research. We do so each year through legislation that funds the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education departments. Our objection is with the use of embryonic stem cells.

Creating and destroying human life in the laboratory for medical research is morally wrong. While the goal is noble, we must never allow ourselves to fall into the trap of believing that the hope of disease relieved justifies research that causes death. Sacrificing the lives of our young, at whatever stage of development, is reminiscent of barbaric civilizations we dare not follow.

Stem-cell research is promising and holds the potential for great medical breakthroughs. However, to focus on the human embryo as the source, requires that we kill in order to heal. Although embryonic stem-cell research is legal, it is simply a bridge too far to expect millions of Americans to pay for it.

The most important difference to be drawn in this debate is that adult stem cells do not simply offer the promise of curing patients, but they have actually cured thousands of Americans. Conversely, embryonic stem cells have never been used to treat any human being for any disease.

Adult stem cells are used to treat Parkinson's disease and leukemia, restore vision to the legally blind, and relieve arthritis. Additionally, the Food and Drug Administration approved in April the first clinical trial of treating heart failure with adult stem cells.

Embryonic stem cells, on the other hand, have never successfully treated any human condition. The idea that they could potentially treat Alzheimer's Disease is highly unlikely. Many experts point to early detection and medication to prevent the progression of Alzheimer's, not stem-cell therapy.

Finally, it is also important to note that the hype surrounding embryonic stem cells can be largely traced to an age-old source - money. Adult stem-cell treatments are largely unpatentable, particularly when it relates to actual patient therapies, thus there is a limited incentive for investment in this research.

On the other hand, anyone who can develop an embryonic stem-cell line that can be used in

laboratories for conducting basic research experiments will have a biological product that will be patentable. The holder of a patent stands to realize a sizable fortune. Conversely, while adult stem cells may prove to cure some of these same illnesses, there is not a profit motive for these cures since they are largely unpatentable.

As your editorial correctly stated, President Ronald Reagan's death re-ignited the national discussion about the ethics of stem-cell research. In his essay, *Abortion and the Conscience of a Nation*, Reagan wrote, "We cannot diminish the value of one category of human life - the unborn - without diminishing the value of all human life."

Congress would be wise to heed Reagan's advice by adhering to the Bush policy - support adult stem-cell research, but never encourage or fund the unethical destruction of human embryos.

Congressman Mike Pence