

Congressman Pence wrote the following op-ed regarding President Obama's [recent executive order on embryonic stem cell research](#)

that was posted online at

*Christianity Today*

entitled "

[The Empty Promise of Embryonic Stem Cell Research](#)

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*There is no right more fundamental than the right to life. There is no realm in which more exciting progress has been made than that of science. And the two are not inherently opposed to one another.*

*I am a Christian who believes that life begins at conception and that a human embryo is human life. Therefore, I believe it is morally wrong to create human life to destroy it for research. Not only that, I believe it is morally wrong to take the tax dollars of millions of pro-life Americans, who believe that life is sacred, and use it to fund the destruction of human embryos for research.*

*As a Christian and pro-life member of Congress, I have consistently supported and advocated for ethical stem-cell research that is consistent with the cherished axiom of Western civilization: that all human life is valuable regardless of where it may fall on the continuum of life.*

*Millions of pro-life Americans believe that life is sacred, and I along with them was deeply troubled by President Obama's executive order eliminating restrictions on embryonic stem-cell research not only because it destroys human life, but particularly because it ignores the advances that have been made in adult stem-cell research. Privately funded embryonic stem-cell research has always been - and remains - legal in the United States. What makes this executive order so unconscionable and offensive to so many is the fact that, thanks to science itself, there are better alternatives that uphold the sanctity of life.*

*Over the past two years, scientific breakthroughs have rendered embryonic stem-cell research obsolete, effectively removing any perceived need to destroy human embryos in the name of science. Adult stem cells [have been used](#) to treat an estimated 11,000 patients in the United States in the past two years alone, and over 70 diseases, including Parkinson's and diabetes, have been treated using adult stem cells.*

*But that's not all. By adding strands of genetic material to adult skin cells, researchers were able to turn normal skin cells into cells that are biologically identical to embryonic stem cells. These altered cells are known as induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells, and unlike embryonic stem cells, iPS cells do not require the destruction of human eggs or embryos. These reprogrammed cells have equal or greater potential to heal unhealthy tissue or combat disease in human organs. One of the greatest advantages of using pluripotent stem cells over embryonic stem cells is the ability to generate stem-cell lines from patients with specific genetic diseases, allowing scientists to use customized, patient-specific stem cells when researching and treating diseases.*

*Although iPS cells were originally discovered in 2007, science has continually extended the scope of their potential. Just this month, an international team of researchers in Canada and Scotland accomplished yet another major breakthrough when iPS cells were created without any cancer-causing enzymes or proteins, effectively and decisively removing any need for embryonic stem-cell research from the realm of publicly financed experimentation.*

*Ethical stem-cell research is a marvelous and wonderful exploration of human cells that will lead to more life-saving discoveries. However, it makes little sense to spend the tax dollars of scores of Americans to fund morally divisive and increasingly outdated methods. Not only are iPS cells more easily obtainable, but they are also more cost-efficient and effective.*

*President Obama has chosen to support the empty promise of embryonic stem-cell research and ignore the living hope available in adult stem cells and iPS cells, in the process trampling the wishes of millions of Americans who cherish the right to life as a gift of God. Americans deserve a government that does not put ideology over science. They deserve to know that positive alternatives have been introduced in Congress, such as the [Patients First Act](#), which would direct the National Institutes of Health to prioritize funding for stem-cell research to those projects that show the greatest potential for near-term clinical benefit while maintaining ethical standards in obtaining those stem cells.*

*Ethical, pragmatic, and effective science should be the hallmark of this nation's policy; our conscience, our faith, and our posterity call for nothing less.*