

TESTIMONY FOR HB 866 (Beard):
to provide tax credits for ethical stem cell research (6/7/07 & 6/11/07?)

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Dr. W. A. Krotoski. I am a physician and retired medical scientist, with a career producing some 55 research articles, several chapters for medical texts, and co-authorship of one such text. I have lived in Louisiana since 1974, in Baton Rouge since 1982, and taught several years at both Tulane and LSU Schools of Medicine and Public Health, as well as their Graduate Schools. In 1989 my research was honored by a nomination for the Nobel Prize in physiology and medicine. Although retired from active practice, I continue to serve on the research ethics board of Baton Rouge General Medical Center. Currently, I represent *The Hippocratic Resource*, a Louisiana-wide organization of physicians and other health professionals who have committed to promoting the principles of the Hippocratic Oath, the foundation of medical ethics. .

I am testifying today in favor of Representative Beard's HB 866, to provide tax credits for ethical, i.e. *non-embryonic* stem cell research, for several reasons:

First, non-embryonic stem cell research, which uses stem cells from adult, placental and umbilical tissues, or from amniotic fluid, does not require the killing or mutilation of human embryos, a developmental stage through which every one of us passed on our way toward birth and adulthood. If the research itself is conducted ethically, this fact alone eliminates the very serious moral dilemma of killing living, innocent human beings, even if they are at the very young embryo stage.

Second, in contrast to embryonic stem cell research, that - despite its touted, theoretical potential - **has produced zero (0) actual clinical applications to date, non-embryonic stem cell research has yielded about four-score treatment modalities** (although some of the latter are still just in early clinical trials). It would seem far more rational to support actual, positive results, rather than theoretical, negative results.

Third, although non-embryonic stem cells may have lesser theoretical potential – described as “pluripotent” - **than stem cells obtained by killing human embryos** – described as “totipotent” – **any theoretical advantage of a greater diversity potential could be offset by a greater complication potential**, e.g. an observed tendency of embryonic stem cells to malignant or cancerous change, as well as a possibly greater, theoretical potential for immune rejection.

Fourth, Louisiana needs a strong research base in innovative bioscience and biotechnology as a means of expanding our scientific, academic, and economic future, and incontrovertibly ethical biomedical research has a tremendous potential for such an expansion within our state, yet without the burden of constantly having to *prove* ethics in actions.

Thank you for your attention, and please support HB 866 and Louisiana's future!

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The Hippocratic Resource