

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN EDWARD M. KENNEDY AT JOINT HELP COMMITTEE  
AND APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE STEM CELL HEARING:**

***CAN CONGRESS HELP FULFILL THE PROMISE OF STEM CELL RESEARCH?***

***(AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY)***

Joint hearings of committees are reserved for issues of special importance – and few issues are more important than bringing new hope and help to millions of patients in need.

Today's hearing is about hope. Hope is what stem cell research brings to millions of Americans who seek cures for cancer, diabetes, spinal cord injury and many other serious conditions. Hope for those with Parkinson's Disease that the tremors of that disease can be cured. Hope that spinal cord injuries can be healed. Hope for children with diabetes that the constant worry and vigilance required to cope with their disease will be a thing of the past.

A week ago, a solid bipartisan majority of the House of Representatives voted for hope and new progress in these battles against illness by approving legislation to unlock the potential of stem cell research. Now the challenge is before the Senate, and we too must respond.

Many of the Senate's staunchest supporters of stem cell research are here today. We represent diverse backgrounds and many faiths. We have come to our support of stem cell research by different paths, but we have all concluded that this research is one of the great potential breakthroughs of modern medicine and that it brings the possibility of fuller, longer life for countless people who suffer from debilitating diseases.

Many of those who oppose this research are here today too, and we welcome their perspective. Those who oppose the research do so out of deeply held moral convictions, and we respect their views even as we differ with them.

Today we will also hear from leading scientists about recent advances in stem cell research and their potential to help Americans whose lives have been devastated by disease or injury. Some have suggested that these new developments avoid the need for the use of stem cells derived from embryos, and we will hear the scientific community's evaluation of that possibility.

We welcome Dr. Story Landis, Director of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke as well as Dr. George Daley of Children's Hospital in Boston and Dr. John Wagner of the University of Minnesota, all of whom are leaders in the field of stem cell research.

But today's hearing is not just a celebration of research – it is a call for change. The search for new cures has been severely limited by the restrictions that President Bush imposed on stem cell research six years ago, when he limited the use of federal funds to the inadequate number of cell lines existing at the time. Last year, President Bush vetoed bipartisan legislation to end those restrictions and offer the hope of fuller, longer lives to millions of our citizens.

Today we will hear of that hope from Lauren Stanford of Plymouth, Massachusetts. We will hear of her courage and dignity in the face of diabetes. I was profoundly moved by the letter she sent me during the stem cell debate last year, describing her hope that stem cell research might allow her to live a future free of her illness, and I'm sure our colleagues on our two committees will welcome the

opportunity to hear her words too.

Lauren is not alone. She joins Nancy Reagan, dozens of Nobel Laureates, thousands of scientists, and millions of patients across the nation in calling for an end to the restrictions that have hobbled the search for new cures.

The debates that we have held in recent years have already led many of our colleagues who opposed the research in the past to support it now. It may be too much to hope that President Bush will join their ranks, but if he could be here today to hear the hopes and dreams of patients like Lauren, surely he would have to re-examine his conscience and reconsider the restrictions he has imposed on the research.

Let us all hope that in a private moment, the President will undertake that re-examination and signal an acceptance of our new bipartisan stem cell legislation – and the hopes of millions of Americans it represents.

The time has come for the Congress and the President to join together to unchain the creative energies of America's scientists and allow them to pursue the promise of stem cell research. There would be few greater triumphs of bipartisan progress than to have the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act signed into law.