

2005 SESSION

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 588

Establishing a joint subcommittee to study medical, ethical, and scientific issues relating to stem cell research conducted in the Commonwealth. Report.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 26, 2005

Agreed to by the Senate, February 26, 2005

WHEREAS, on August 25, 2000, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) published guidelines relating to stem cell research and the funding thereof, calling for the denial of funding for research involving stem cells derived from embryonic human beings created for research purposes and noting that the 42nd President of the United States, many members of Congress, the NIH Human Embryo Research Panel, and the National Bioethics Advisory Committee had all endorsed the "distinction between embryos created for research purposes and those created for reproductive purposes"; and

WHEREAS, the President announced on August 9, 2001, "that federal funds may be awarded for research using human embryonic stem cells under the following criteria: (i) the derivation process was initiated prior to 9:00 P.M. EDT on August 9, 2001; (ii) the stem cells must have been derived from an embryo that was created for reproductive purposes and was no longer needed; and (iii) informed consent must have been obtained for the donation of the embryo and that donation must not have involved financial inducements"; and

WHEREAS, according to NIH, "investigators from laboratories in the United States, Australia, India, Israel, and Sweden have derived stem cells from 71 individual, genetically diverse blastocysts which meet federal criteria for federally funded human embryonic stem cell research"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study medical, ethical, and scientific issues relating to stem cell research conducted in the Commonwealth. The joint subcommittee shall have a total membership of 15 members that shall consist of eight legislative members and seven nonlegislative citizen members. Members shall be appointed as follows: five members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates; three members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; one representative each of the University of Virginia School of Medicine and the Eastern Virginia Medical School, and two nonlegislative citizen members at-large to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; and one representative of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine, and two nonlegislative citizen members at-large to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules. Nonlegislative citizen members of the joint subcommittee shall be citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the chairman of the joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk, nonlegislative citizen members shall only be reimbursed for travel originating and ending within the Commonwealth of Virginia for the purpose of attending meetings. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required. The joint subcommittee shall elect a chairman and vice chairman from among its membership, who shall be members of the General Assembly.

In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall examine the medical, ethical, and scientific policy implications of stem cell research, and the efficacy of research using both adult and embryonic stem cells.

Administrative staff support shall be provided by the Office of the Clerk of the House of Delegates. Legal, research, policy analysis, and other services as requested by the joint subcommittee shall be provided by the Division of Legislative Services. Technical assistance shall be provided by State Board of Health and the Board of Medicine. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee for this study, upon request.

The joint subcommittee shall be limited to four meetings for the 2005 interim, and the direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$15,600 without approval as set out in this resolution. Of this amount an estimated \$2,000 is allocated for speakers, materials, and other resources. Approval for unbudgeted nonmember-related expenses shall require the written authorization of the chairman of the joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required.

No recommendation of the joint subcommittee shall be adopted if a majority of the House members or a majority of the Senate members appointed to the joint subcommittee (i) vote against the recommendation and (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the joint subcommittee.

The joint subcommittee shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2005, and the chairman shall

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submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the 2006 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall state whether the joint subcommittee intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and the report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the 2005 interim.