

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

January 21, 2004 LB 602

do. We don't need to rush into this. The best minds in the country are working on it. He also said that an additional future stem cell report may include recommendations as to how to proceed. Let me just give you a few quotes from the letter that Mr. Kass sent to the President. We have consulted widely, heard presentations, and commissioned review essays on all the subjects, scientific, ethical, and legal. Our desire is to both understand what is going on in the laboratory and, too, for ourselves, and the various arguments, the ongoing debates. Because this field and the current policy are so young, are so young, this report can be made...can no more be than an update. It contains no proposed guidelines, no regulations, nor indeed any specific recommendations for public policy; desire to promote important biomedical research without endorsing funding or creating incentives for the future destruction of human embryos. Second, we have tried to provide an overview of the ethical and policy debates surrounding stem cell research in the past two years. As you already know quite well, these are immensely difficult and challenging matters, with the obligations owed to nascent human life pitted against the obligations to seek knowledge that might someday alleviate much human suffering. Thirdly, recent scientific developments in human stem cell research, embryonic and adult, basic and applied--listen to this. Our goal in this report is to enable especially nonscientific leaders to appreciate the reasons for the excitement over stem cell research. All above, we want all parties of these debates to understand that their opponents, too, have something vital to defend,...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR JOHNSON: ...not only for themselves, but for all of us. Our hope is that our work will help make these debates richer, fairer, and more informed. One of the things that we hear, and we've heard from the introducer of this bill, is that adult stem cells are just wonderful and will do everything. Here's...I'm sorry if I misquoted you. I will find the reference. At any rate, let me just say what the leading stem cell researcher in the country, or certainly one of them, from the University of Minnesota, had to say. While I am pleased with the advancements made with adult stem cells, I continue to believe strongly that