

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

January 22, 2004 LB 602

that Senator Johnson was using a report that was looking at embryonic stem cell research not necessarily produced by cloning. This bill only relates to cloning. LB 602 only seeks to ban embryo farms, if you will, the artificial production of embryos for the purpose of either implanting for full reproductive cloning or for whatever other purpose there might be. And we've heard a lot about therapeutic cloning. LB 602, let me emphasize, does not relate to, and I do not seek to amend it so as to relate to, the natural production of an embryo to be used in research or otherwise. I want to point out that the Council...the President's Council does have a diversity of opinion on it. It wasn't a stacked deck. But a majority of the council, they had a controversial recommendation that Congress should impose at least a four-year moratorium on cloning for biomedical research, in which cloned embryos are created and destroyed for research purposes. Now, there were seven members who disagreed with that. But a majority of the council has a problem with cloning, for whatever purpose, but specifically for research purposes, where that embryo is destroyed so that we can use its stem cells for further research. But we've heard the Genome...the Human Genome Project in debate, last session specifically. And the embryo contains the human genome, contains the genetics of that person-to-be, of that living organism, being the embryo. And let me explain a little bit what the genome is. It's simply the sum of hereditary information for the species. Written in the molecular language of DNA and organized into genes, the genome encodes all the instructions the organism needs to synthesize cellular building blocks and develop from an embryo into a unique mature individual with a beating heart, sensitive fingers, and a brain that even in toddlers vastly outclasses the most advanced computers. Although microscopic in size, the human genome is enormous in its information content. Its 3.1 billion nucleotide-based pairs are arranged along a double-helical strand of DNA that, if removed from a single cell and stretched out, would measure more than five feet long, but only 50 trillionths of an inch in thickness. That embryo contains a lot, a lot of information,...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.