

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

May 20, 2005

LB 117

We seem to be more often stuck on definitions rather than flowing forward, confident of our ability to distinguish right from wrong in new situations of one type or another; that we are becoming a more hesitant people in general, ignoring that kind of take-it-on heritage that is ours and which made us...has made us the greatest country in the world ever. And that heritage has always succeeded in reconciling science and technology and religion and individual freedom by a careful weighing of the facts in each case. Let me talk about the two specific examples that brought this all to my mind. One is small and one is large. And the small one is this whole business of the amazing technology of data collection and data information and databases, and the enormous power to do good with this technology. And in this particular situation, we have a particularly bad problem, methamphetamine, and we can apply this technology to help us solve a bad problem. And yet, we are hesitant. And I understand that the rights to privacy and that whole line of thought is important to the discussion. But it seems to me that sometimes it's the thing itself, it's the technology itself, that makes us uncomfortable, and we're not engaging and not willing to recognize the pros and cons of something and engage and decide on that basis. And then the other thing, a much larger thing, was in the paper today. "Stem cell research breakthrough in Korea." Korea, a very fine people, I'm sure, like all others, but a country in my early youth that was known for making trinkets and fireworks and trivial things. They made the first breakthrough in stem cell research. Now,...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR BEUTLER: ...South Korean scientists have created the first human embryonic stem cells that are a genetic match to patients. Scientists harvested 12 lines of stem cells, each a genetic match to the donor of the skin cells. And yet, here we are, paralyzed with apprehension, immobilized by indecision, unable to recognize the enormous greater good in what can be accomplished in this area of science; paralyzed like we are with so many things because we lack confidence that we can put adequate parameters on a new technology. Yet we've always done it in the past. We're not an immoral society today. We have