

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the House of Representatives passed S. 5, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, with a strong bipartisan vote of 224 to 191. Congressman Xavier Becerra (CA-31), Assistant to the Speaker of the House and the only member from Southern California on the Ways and Means Committee, joined his colleagues in voting for the bill.

The House had passed a similar bill, H.R. 3, as part of the Democratic Majority's "First 100 Hours Agenda" in January; the Senate passed S. 5 in April. By ratifying S. 5 today, the House is sending the bill directly to the president's desk.

"Today Congress did its part to prioritize the needs of millions of Americans suffering from debilitating and terminal diseases by opening the doors to the promise of stem cell research," Rep. Becerra said following the vote. "It is now the President's responsibility to reconsider his opposition to this potentially life saving research and sign this vital piece of legislation."

If signed into law, this bill would expand the federal funding of embryonic stem cell research by lifting the restrictions on the embryonic stem cell lines that can be used for federally-funded research – restrictions that were imposed by President Bush in 2001. Most of the stem cell lines authorized for federally-funded research under the president's policy are now no longer useful for research. However, the bill only authorizes federal research funds for stem cell lines generated from embryos that would otherwise be discarded by fertility clinics. The bill also creates an ethical framework that must be followed in conducting this research under the guidance of the National Institutes of Health.

The legislation enjoys the support of more than 500 organizations, including the American Medical Association, AARP, Association of American Medical Colleges, and Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, as well as many faith-based groups.

This stem cell research bill passed in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, but was vetoed by President Bush in July 2006.

“I urge President Bush to take in to consideration the hope this legislation offers to so many Americans suffering from cancer, Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s, diabetes, and other currently intractable diseases when deciding whether to sign this bill,” Rep. Becerra said.

### [Becerra.House.gov](http://Becerra.House.gov) ###