

PRESS RELEASE...

... from the Illinois House of Representatives

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 30, 2007

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Stephen Landfear

(773) 296-4141

Feigenholtz's landmark stem cell bill signed by governor

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Rod Blagojevich signed Senate Bill 4 this week, a measure that allows public funds to be allocated for stem cell research in Illinois. Rep. Sara Feigenholtz (D-Chicago) and Rep. Tom Cross (R-Oswego) labored for several months and went through multiple drafts of the legislation to ensure such a proposal could pass the statehouse.

“Only now are we beginning to realize the potential benefits of [stem cell] research. There is a wealth of evidence to suggest that, if done properly and responsibly, such research can lead to cures for diseases like Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s,” Feigenholtz said.

The governor’s approval of SB 4 effectively makes Illinois the first state to successfully pass such legislation. Proposals to ease restrictions on federal funding for stem cell research have stalled in recent years because of opposition by the White House and some members of the US Congress.

“I believe that public officials should encourage those initiatives that seek to alleviate suffering and this legislation [SB 4] is intended to do just that. It is not the job of government to encumber scientists and researchers with red tape and religious doctrine,” Feigenholtz said.

The legislation, while expressly banning human cloning, allows researchers to work with and study embryonic stem cells in the state of Illinois, most of which come from in-vitro fertilization. It also establishes an institute charged with awarding grants to scientists for stem cell research.

“I am very proud to have sponsored this important bill, which received bipartisan support in both chambers of the General Assembly. I hold on to the hope that stem cell research will produce the cures and treatments that we can only dream of today,” Feigenholtz added.

The passage of SB 4 makes Illinois the first state in the nation to officially endorse stem cell research.

###