



March 5, 2009

Georgia Bio Opposes Senate Bill 169

Georgia Bio is the private, non-profit, membership based organization promoting the interests of Georgia's life sciences industry. We represent nearly 300 pharmaceutical, biotechnology and medical device companies, universities, research institutes, government groups and other organizations involved in the discovery and development of life sciences products that improve the health and quality of life of people worldwide.

Georgia Bio members are leaders in creating new therapies and cures for life-threatening and debilitating illnesses such as heart disease, cancer, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, epilepsy, diabetes, arthritis, and infectious diseases such as AIDS and influenza.

On behalf of Georgia Bio, we strongly oppose Senate Bill 169 and its proposal to criminalize stem cell research and therapeutic cloning. Our position is that Georgia should not enact laws regarding scientific research that are more restrictive than the laws of the federal government. SB 169 goes far beyond federal restrictions on stem cell research.

Stem cell research has the potential to positively affect the lives of millions of Americans by leading to new treatments and cures for many of humanity's most devastating conditions. It is research that the federal government, nearly every state and most nations consider legal and ethical and that the majority of Georgians and Americans support.

Georgia Bio recognizes that significant ethical issues are raised about therapeutic cloning and embryonic stem cell research and we support use of this research under the appropriate system of regulatory and ethical oversight. We respect the views of those who oppose such research. However, we do not agree with the proponents of SB 169 based on what we believe is an overriding consideration; that it would be tragic to lose the unique potential for alleviating human suffering of millions of patients in desperate need of medical advances afforded by studying stem cells.

A poll commissioned by Georgia Bio in 2006 also revealed that two-thirds of registered voters in Georgia, Republican and Democrat, favored embryonic stem cell research with donated embryos from fertility clinics.

In addition, the poll showed two-thirds of Georgia voters believe that any medical research allowed by federal law should be allowed in Georgia; and three-fourths believe that new treatments derived from embryonic stem cell research done outside the state should be allowed in Georgia.

SB 169 is wrong for Georgia. Governor Sonny Perdue has identified life sciences as a top strategic industry for economic growth. Passage of SB 169 would single Georgia out as an anti-technology state, undermining many of our life sciences economic development efforts. With the world's biotech community focused on Georgia for the 2009 BIO International Convention, passage of this legislation would severely embarrass and harm our state's image and reputation as a progressive state that supports innovation.

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