November 5, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-232 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-230 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boehner
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Boehner:

The undersigned leaders of academic medicine, who include medical school deans, teaching hospital CEOs, and academic society presidents, urge Congress to consider and pass the “Stem Cell Research Advancement Act” (H.R. 4808/S. 3766) when the Senate and House of Representatives reconvene in November. Congress must act before the end of the current session to approve this legislation to authorize and continue Federal support for human embryonic stem cell research while adhering to strict federal oversight and standards. In accordance with current law, the legislation ensures that no Federal funding shall be used to derive stem cells or destroy embryos.

The discovery of human embryonic stem cells is a significant research advance and Federal support to U.S. researchers is essential both to translate this discovery into novel therapies for a range of serious and intractable diseases, and to ensure that this research is conducted under a rigorous and credible ethical regime. The therapeutic potential of human embryonic stem cells is remarkable and could well prove to be one of the most significant paradigm-shifting advances in the history of medical science. These cells have the unique potential to differentiate into any human cell type and offer real hope of life-affirming treatments for diabetes, damaged heart tissue, arthritis, Parkinson’s, ALS and spinal cord injuries, to name but a few examples. There is also the possibility that these cells could be used to create more complex organ structures that could replace diseased vital organs, such as kidneys, livers, or even hearts.

We recognize the significant ethical issues that are raised by human embryonic stem cell research and we respect the view of those who oppose such research, including some in our own academic medical community. However, we are persuaded otherwise by what we believe is an equally compelling ethical consideration, namely, that it would be tragic to waste the unique potential afforded by embryonic stem cells, derived from embryos destined to be discarded in any case, to alleviate human suffering and enhance the quality of human life.
This legislation, which has received strong bipartisan support in previous Congresses, recognizes the need to authorize and continue Federal support of research on human embryonic stem cells so that the tremendous scientific and medical benefits of their use may one day become available to the millions of patients who so desperately need them. Again, we urge you to put this legislation on the floor calendar and pass it when Congress returns in November to help ensure the potential of this research is translated into treatments and cures.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Alpern, M.D.
Dean and Ensign Professor
Yale University School of Medicine

M. Dewayne Andrews, M.D.
Vice President for Health Affairs & Executive Dean
University of Oklahoma College of Medicine

Nancy C. Andrews, M.D., Ph.D.
Dean
Duke University School of Medicine

Karen H. Antman, M.D.
Dean, Boston University School of Medicine
Provost, Boston University Medical Campus

Barbara Atkinson, M.D.
Executive Vice Chancellor
University of Kansas Medical Center
Executive Dean, School of Medicine

Jeffrey R. Balser, M.D., Ph.D.
Dean
Vanderbilt University School of Medicine

Terry A. Belmont
Chief Executive Officer
Vice Chancellor for Medical Center Affairs
University of California Irvine Medical Center

A. Lorris Betz, M.D., Ph.D.
Senior Vice President for Health Sciences
Executive Dean, School of Medicine
CEO, University Health Care
University of Utah

D. Craig Brater, M.D.
Dean
Indiana University School of Medicine

David A. Brenner, M.D.
Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences and Dean
University of California, San Diego, School of Medicine
Peter F. Buckley, M.D.
Interim Dean, School of Medicine
Medical College of Georgia

Michael E. Cain, M.D.
Dean, School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences
University at Buffalo

Frank B. Cerra M.D.
Senior Vice President for Health Sciences
Dean, Medical School
McKnight Presidential Leadership Chair
University of Minnesota

Dennis S. Charney, M.D.
Dean, Mount Sinai School of Medicine

Ralph V. Clayman, M.D.
Dean, School of Medicine
University of California, Irvine

Giuseppe Colasurdo, M.D.
Dean and H. Wayne Hightower Distinguished Professor in the Medical Sciences
The University of Texas Medical School at Houston
UTHealth, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

Christopher C. Colenda, M.D., M.P.H.
Chancellor for Health Sciences
West Virginia University

Paul R. G. Cunningham, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Dean and Senior Associate Vice Chancellor for Medical Affairs
East Carolina University

Robert M. D'Alessandri, M.D.
President and Dean
The Commonwealth Medical College

Kenneth L. Davis, M.D.
President and CEO
The Mount Sinai Medical Center

Pamela B. Davis, MD, PhD
Dean and Vice President for Medical Affairs
Arline H. and Curtis F. Garvin Research Professor
Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine

Steven T. DeKosky, M.D., F.A.C.P.
Vice President and Dean
University of Virginia School of Medicine
Thomas A. Deutsch, M.D.
Dean and Senior Vice President, Medical Affairs
Rush Medical College of Rush University
Medical Center

Michael J. Friedlander, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute
Professor of Biological Sciences
and of Biomedical Engineering
Virginia Tech

J. Kevin Dorsey M.D., Ph.D.
Dean and Provost
Southern Illinois University School of Medicine

Walter R. Frontera, M.D., Ph.D.
Dean
University of Puerto Rico
School of Medicine

Debra H. Fiser, M.D.
Dean, College of Medicine
Vice Chancellor
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

Steven G. Gabbe, M.D.
Senior Vice President for Health Sciences
CEO, The Ohio State University Medical Center

Jeffrey S. Flier, M.D.
Dean of the Faculty of Medicine
Harvard Medical School

William E. Gibbons, M.D.
President
American Society for Reproductive Medicine

Terence R. Flotte, M.D.
Celia and Isaac Haidak Professor of Medical Education
Dean, Provost and Executive Deputy Chancellor
The University of Massachusetts Medical School

Robert N. Golden, M.D.
Dean, School of Medicine and Public Health
Vice Chancellor for Medical Affairs
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Lee Goldman, M.D., M.P.H.
Executive Vice President for Health and Biomedical Science
and Dean of the Faculties of Medicine and Health Sciences
Columbia University Medical Center

Gary Gottlieb, M.D., M.B.A.
President and Chief Executive Officer
Partners HealthCare

Antonio M. Gotto, Jr., M.D., D.Phil.
Dean
Weill Cornell Medical College

Robert I. Grossman, M.D.
Dean and CEO
NYU Langone Medical Center

Sandra Harris-Hooker, Ph.D.
Interim Dean and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
Morehouse School of Medicine

Samuel Hawgood, M.B.B.S
Dean
University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine

Jerris Hedges, M.D., M.S., M.M.M.
Dean
John A. Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawai‘i at Manoa

Peter Jensen, M.D.
President
Association of Pathology Chairs

Cynda Ann Johnson, M.D., M.B.A.
President and Founding Dean
Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine

Kathryn J. Jones
President
American Association of Anatomists

Stephen K. Jones
President and CEO
Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital

Paul Klotman, M.D.
President & CEO
Baylor College of Medicine
Richard D. Krugman, MD
Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs
Dean, School of Medicine
University of Colorado Denver

Mark R. Laret
CEO
University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) Medical Center

Thomas J. Lawley, M.D.
Dean
Emory University School of Medicine

Cato T. Laurencin, M.D., Ph.D.
Vice President for Health Affairs
Dean of the School of Medicine
Albert and Wilda Van Dusen Chair in Academic Medicine
Distinguished Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery and Chemical, Materials and Biomolecular Engineering
The University of Connecticut

Arthur S. Levine, M.D.
Senior Vice Chancellor for the Health Sciences
Dean, School of Medicine
University of Pittsburgh

Catherine R. Lucey, M.D., F.A.C.P.
Interim Dean, College of Medicine
Vice Dean for Education
The Ohio State University College of Medicine

Lilly Marks
Vice President for Health Affairs
University of Colorado
Executive Vice Chancellor
Anschutz Medical Campus

Roderick R. McInnes, M.D., Ph.D.
President
American Society of Human Genetics

Shlomo Melmed, M.D.
Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the Medical Faculty
Cedars-Sinai Medical Center

Edward D. Miller, M.D.
Dean of the Medical Faculty
CEO, Johns Hopkins Medicine
Claire Pomeroy, M.D., M.B.A.
Vice Chancellor and Dean
University of California, Davis, School of Medicine

Carmen A. Puliafito, M.D., M.B.A.
Dean, Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California

Paul G. Ramsey, M.D.
CEO, UW Medicine
Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs and Dean of the School of Medicine
University of Washington

Peter Rapp
Executive Vice President, Oregon Health & Science University
Executive Director, OHSU Healthcare

Marsha D. Rappleye, M.D.
Dean, College of Human Medicine
Michigan State University

Scott L. Rauch, M.D.
President
McLean Hospital

Jonathan Ravdin, M.D.
Dean
Medical College of Wisconsin

John R. Raymond, Sr., M.D.
President and CEO
Medical College of Wisconsin

E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA
Vice President for Medical Affairs, University of Maryland
John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor and Dean, University of Maryland School of Medicine

Mark A Richardson, M.D., M.Sc.B., M.B.A.
Dean, Oregon Health & Science University
School of Medicine
President, Faculty Practice Plan

Jose Ginel Rodriguez, M.D., F.A.A.P.
President and Dean of Medicine
Universidad Central del Caribe

William L. Roper, M.D., M.P.H.
Dean
School of Medicine
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Arthur J. Ross, III, M.D., M.B.A.  
Dean  
Professor of Surgery and Pediatrics  
Robert C. Byrd Health Sciences Center  
West Virginia University School of Medicine

Paul B. Roth, M.D., M.S., F.A.C.E.P.  
Executive Vice President for Health Sciences  
Dean, School of Medicine  
The University of New Mexico  
Health Sciences Center

Arthur H. Rubenstein, M.B.B.Ch.  
Executive Vice President  
Dean, School of Medicine  
University of Pennsylvania

Steve J. Schwab, M.D.  
Executive Dean  
College of Medicine  
University of Tennessee Health Science Center

James L. Scott, MD  
Dean  
The George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences

Janet R. Serwint, MD  
President  
Academic Pediatric Association

Larry J. Shapiro, MD  
Executive Vice Chancellor for Medical Affairs and Dean  
Washington University in St. Louis School of Medicine

T. Samuel Shomaker, M.D., J.D.  
The Jean and Thomas McMullin Dean of Medicine  
Vice President for Clinical Affairs  
Texas A&M Health Science Center College of Medicine
Peter L. Slavin, M.D.
President
Massachusetts General Hospital

Lawrence Smith, MD
Dean, Hofstra University School of Medicine
CMO, North Shore-LIJ Health System

Wiley W. Souba, M.D., Sc.D., M.B.A.
Vice President for Health Affairs, Dartmouth College
Dean, Dartmouth Medical School

Allen M. Spiegel, M.D.
The Marilyn and Stanley M. Katz Dean
Albert Einstein College of Medicine

David Storto
President
Spaulding Rehabilitation Network

Jerome F. Strauss, III, M.D., Ph.D.
Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs, VCU Health System
Dean, School of Medicine
Virginia Commonwealth University

Jeffrey Susman, M.D.
Dean
Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine

Elliot J. Sussman, M.D., M.B.A.
President & CEO
Lehigh Valley Health Network

Mark B. Taubman, M.D.
Dean, School of Medicine and Dentistry
University Vice President for Health Sciences
University of Rochester

John Tomkowiak, M.D., M.O.L.
Acting Dean, Chicago Medical School
Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science
Mark L. Tykocinski, M.D.
Dean
Jefferson Medical College

Vincent P. Verdile, M.D.
Dean
Albany Medical College

Peter D. Wagner, M.D.
President
American Physiological Society

Vice Chancellor, UCLA Health Sciences
Dean, David Geffen School of Medicine

Emery A. Wilson, MD
Interim Dean
University of Kentucky College of Medicine

Edward J. Wing, M.D.
Dean of Medicine and Biological Sciences
Brown University

James O. Woolliscroft, M.D.
Dean
University of Michigan Medical School