

Congress. This House in a bipartisan way came together, under the leadership of Congresswoman Diana DeGette of Colorado and Michael Castle of Delaware, to pass a bipartisan measure with a strong vote, 253-174, a bill that would expand the stem cell research in this country and lead to great cures, cures which promise to help people turn around their lives, people that have suffered through debilitating and life-threatening diseases.

Stem cell research holds the promise to help those who suffer from heart disease, various cancers, diabetes, Alzheimer's, kidney disease, liver disease, Parkinson's, to name a few.

Breakthroughs in research are happening every day. But with the bill passed today in this new Congress, even more can be done to provide hope and lifesaving cures to the millions of Americans affected by these diseases.

While there are ethical issues surrounding medical research of any kind, I do not believe that we should unreasonably restrict new medical research and prevent Americans from receiving lifesaving treatments. President Bush's current restrictions are unreasonable and arbitrary.

I believe it is imperative that legislation concerning stem cell research contain strong ethical standards over the conduct of research, and the bill passed today provides such high standards.

Many people have asked me about my best day during my first term in the 109th Congress that just concluded. I can say, without question, the day was May 24, 2005, because it was a day that gave the best hope for lifesaving cures for so many. Those hopes were, unfortunately, dashed when President Bush vetoed the bill, H.R. 810 in the last Congress.

We have come together again, passed this bill with an even stronger bipartisan vote, and I expect it will go to the Senate and pass there again with another strong bipartisan vote. And I would urge the President to reconsider his position. So many people's lives, the quality of lives for their families depend on this research continuing.

This bill, as I said, contained detailed ethical standards on this type of research, and that is an important part of this legislation going forward. This issue has united Americans and actually united this Congress in powerful ways and with a strong voice.

My home State of Missouri has taken a lead in this debate. Expanding stem cell research is supported by 72 percent of Americans from across the political spectrum, and that goes for my home State of Missouri. This past November, Missourians came out to the polls in record numbers in support of stem cell research that holds the potential for lifesaving cures. Our State passed a ballot initiative that ensures Missourians will have access to any stem cell research and cures that are allowed under Federal law and available to other Americans. And it also included strong ethical standards for conducting that research.

Acting in response to the countless Americans who want a new direction in this new Congress, we have begun to respond. Today, the people's House actually acted on behalf of the American people and generations to come. Members from both sides of the aisle came together in support of the pursuit of lifesaving cures and passed H.R. 3, the Stem Cell Research Act.

It is my strong hope that the message of hope sent by both the American people and their Representatives will be heard by President Bush. By signing this vital legislation now into law, the President can provide the hope of potential lifesaving cures to millions of Americans.

WEST VALLEY DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. KUHLE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KUHLE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to make the House aware of a serious problem in my Congressional district in upstate New York.

The West Valley Demonstration Project, which is located here, was created by Congress in 1980 to solidify in glass the nuclear waste left over from a variety of sources, including defense atomic waste. This project successfully vitrified all of the high-level waste on the site over the next 2 decades, placing the waste in safe gas containers ready to store in a permanent storage facility.

West Valley is unique in the Department of Energy system in that the site is owned by the State of New York, but the operation is funded 90 percent by the Federal Government and 10 percent by the State of New York. While there is little question that the waste is, in large part, Federal waste, the Federal Government is not owning up to its responsibility to completely clean the site so that it can be returned to the community of West Valley and reused for economic development opportunities.

There is now a grave problem that threatens all of us. Some of the radiation has leaked into the ground water and formed a plume, as shown here on chart 2. The plume continues to grow and threatens streams on the site. These streams feed into larger tributaries which empty into the largest body of fresh water in the world. I repeat that: the largest body of fresh water in the world, the Great Lakes. Lake Erie's shores are only 25 miles away. Better shown on this chart, West Valley Demonstration Project, the creeks to Lake Erie.

It was estimated that the cleanup of this plume would require the removal of 4 million cubic feet of soil just a few years ago. Current estimates suggest 30 million cubic feet of soil would need to be removed to eliminate the threat if done today.

The Federal Government has simply moved the ropes around the affected

area. Rather than cleaning it up, a few years ago when the problem was first noticed, the Department of Energy has roped off the area, allowed it to grow and grow and grow.

I will be introducing legislation once again during this term of Congress, Mr. Speaker, to direct the Department of Energy to take immediate possession of the Western New York Nuclear Service Center at West Valley and remediate the entire site, including this dangerous plume. The Department of Energy would be responsible for all costs of the clean up, as New York State neither has the resources nor the ability to do so. This is a Federal problem that requires Federal attention.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission would be given authority to regulate activities of the Department of Energy at West Valley and consult with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation in executing the remediation.

The West Valley Remediation Act will replace and supersede the West Valley Demonstration Project Act of 1980, if adopted, but does not reduce any of the act's decontamination or decommissioning provisions.

Appropriations of roughly \$95 million per year would be authorized to implement the act, and additional appropriations would also be authorized to benefit the community.

The Department of Energy is then precluded from transporting any additional hazardous or radioactive waste to the site for the purpose of treatment or disposal.

Most importantly, the site would be cleaned and returned to its natural state, and the Great Lakes would no longer be threatened, taking care of a potential international environmental hazard of monumental proportions.

Mr. Speaker, I hope you and my colleagues will work with me and with the Senate to find a solution to this problem.

END THE OCCUPATION IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I began to circulate a plan among Members of Congress to establish a path towards the United States exiting Iraq.

As we know, the administration is prepared to escalate the conflict. They intend to increase troop levels to an unprecedented number without establishing an ending date.

It is important for Congress to oppose the troop surge, but that is not enough. We must respond powerfully to take steps to end the occupation, close U.S. bases in Iraq and bring our troops home. These steps are necessary preconditions to the U.S. extricating itself from Iraq through the establishment of an international security and peacekeeping force.