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serves the cause of humanity instead of the other way around.

America pursues medical advances in the name of life, and we will achieve the great breakthroughs we all seek with reverence for the gift of life. I believe America's scientists have the ingenuity and skill to meet this challenge. And I look forward to working with Congress and the scientific community to achieve these great and noble goals in the years ahead.

Thank you all for coming, and may God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:08 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. S. 3504, approved July 19, was assigned Public Law No. 109–242.

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval the "Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2005"

July 19, 2006

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 810, the "Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2005."

Like all Americans, I believe our Nation must vigorously pursue the tremendous possibilities that science offers to cure disease and improve the lives of millions. Yet, as science brings us ever closer to unlocking the secrets of human biology, it also offers temptations to manipulate human life and violate human dignity. Our conscience and history as a Nation demand that we resist this temptation. With the right scientific techniques and the right policies, we can achieve scientific progress while living up to our ethical responsibilities.

In 2001, I set forth a new policy on stem cell research that struck a balance between the needs of science and the demands of conscience. When I took office, there was no Federal funding for human embryonic stem cell research. Under the policy I announced 5 years ago, my Administration became the first to make Federal funds available for this research, but only on embryonic stem cell lines derived from embryos that had already been destroyed. My Administration has made available more than $90 million for research of these lines. This policy has allowed important research to go forward and has allowed America to continue to lead the world in embryonic stem cell research without encouraging the further destruction of living human embryos.

H.R. 810 would overturn my Administration's balanced policy on embryonic stem cell research. If this bill were to become law, American taxpayers for the first time in our history would be compelled to fund the deliberate destruction of human embryos. Crossing this line would be a grave mistake and would needlessly encourage a conflict between science and ethics that can only do damage to both and harm our Nation as a whole.

Advances in research show that stem cell science can progress in an ethical way. Since I announced my policy in 2001, my Administration has expanded funding of research into stem cells that can be drawn from children, adults, and the blood in umbilical cords with no harm to the donor, and these stem cells are currently being used in medical treatments. Science also offers the hope that we may one day enjoy the potential benefits of embryonic stem cells without destroying human life. Researchers are investigating new techniques that might allow doctors and scientists to produce stem cells just as versatile as those derived from human embryos without harming life. We must continue to explore these hopeful alternatives, so we can advance the cause of scientific research while staying true to the ideals of a decent and humane society.

I hold to the principle that we can harness the promise of technology without becoming slaves to technology and ensure that science serves the cause of humanity. If we are to find the right ways to advance ethical medical research, we must also be willing when necessary to reject the wrong ways. For that reason, I must veto this bill.

George W. Bush

The White House,
July 19, 2006.

Remarks at the NAACP Annual Convention

July 20, 2006

The President. Thank you very much. Bruce, thanks for your introduction. Bruce is a polite guy—I thought what he was going to say, "It's about time you showed up." [*Laughter*] And I'm glad I did. See, I see this as a moment of opportunity. I have come to celebrate the heroism of the civil rights movement and the accomplishments of the NAACP.

I want to talk about ways to build what the NAACP has always sought—a nation united, committed to destroying discrimination and extending to every American the full blessings—the full blessings—of liberty and opportunity. It's important to me. It's important to our Nation. I come from a family committed to civil rights. My faith tells me that we're all children of God, equally loved, equally cherished, equally entitled to the rights He grants us all.

For nearly 200 years, our Nation failed the test of extending the blessings of liberty to African Americans. Slavery was legal for nearly 100 years and discrimination legal in many places for nearly 100 years more. Taken together, the record placed a stain on America's founding, a stain that we have not yet wiped clean.

When people talk about America's Founders, they mention the likes of Washington and Jefferson and Franklin and Adams. Too often they ignore another group of founders—men and women and children who did not come to America of their free will but in chains. These founders literally helped build our country. They chopped the wood; they built the homes; they tilled the fields; and they reaped the harvest. They raised the children of others even though their own children had been ripped away and sold to strangers. These founders were denied the most basic birthright, and that's freedom.

Yet through captivity and oppression, they kept the faith. They carved a great nation out of the wilderness, and later, their descendants led a people out of the wilderness of bigotry. Nearly 200 years into our history as a nation, America experienced a second founding, the civil rights movement. Some of those leaders are here. These second founders, led by the likes of Thurgood Marshall and Martin Luther King, Jr., believed in the constitutional guarantees of liberty and equality. They trusted fellow Americans to join them in doing the right thing. They were leaders. They toppled Jim Crow through simple deeds: boarding a bus; walking along the road; showing up peacefully at courthouses; or joining in prayer and song. Despite the sheriff's dogs and the jailer's scorn and the hangman's noose and the assassin's bullets, they prevailed.

I don't know if you remember, 3 weeks ago, I went to Memphis, Tennessee. A lot of people focused on the fact that my friend, the Prime Minister of Japan, was an Elvis fan, because we went to Graceland. But we also went to another stop, a stop Reverend Jesse Jackson knows all too well, a painful moment in his life and in the life of our Nation, reflected in the Lorraine Motel.

The Prime Minister and I went there, which is now the National Civil Rights Museum. By the way, if you haven't been there, you ought to go. Among the people greeting me there was Dr. Benjamin Hooks. It's good to see you again, sir. He led me out onto the balcony of Room 306. I remember, Dr. Hooks pointed to the window that was still half-cracked. You know what I'm talking about, Jesse. It's not very far away. It was a powerful reminder of the hardships this Nation has been through, the struggle for decency.

I was honored that Dr. Hooks took time to visit with me. He talked about the hardships of the movement. With the gentle wisdom that comes from experience, he made it clear: We must work as one. And that's why I've come today. We want a united America that is one Nation under God, where every man and child and woman is valued and treated with dignity. We want a hopeful America where the prosperity and opportunities of our great land reach into every block of every neighborhood. We want an America that is constantly renewing itself, where citizens rise above political differences to heal old wounds, to build the bonds of brotherhood, and to move us ever closer to the founding promise of liberty and justice for all.