



Dedicated to Advancing Stem Cell Research

Coalition for the Advancement of Medical Research

2021 K Street, N.W., Suite 305 ♦ Washington D.C. 20006 ♦ 202.725.0339 ♦ www.camradvocacy.org

Mississippians for Healthy Families
Jackson, MS

October 31, 2011

Dear Mississippians for Healthy Families Coalition Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Coalition for the Advancement of Medical Research (CAMR) regarding the "Initiative 26 -- Definition of a Person" on Mississippi's ballot in November. Our coalition and its nearly 100 member organizations strongly oppose this amendment. CAMR represents the voices of patients, physicians, scientists, and academic institutions across the country in the hope that regenerative medicine will provide cures and better treatments for those who suffer from debilitating diseases and disorders. We have grassroots members from patient and other advocacy organizations in every state in the nation, including Mississippi.

The proposed constitutional amendment in Mississippi defines the word "person" or "persons", as those terms are used in Article III of the state constitution, to include every human being from the moment of fertilization, cloning, or the functional equivalent thereof. Establishing legal "personhood" at the moment of fertilization would jeopardize all forms of embryonic stem cell research in the state of Mississippi, putting at risk not just jobs and potential economic growth, but also the future health and well-being of the state's residents.

As you know, embryonic stem cell research could help nearly 100 million Americans suffering from cancer, heart disease, juvenile diabetes, Parkinson's, spinal cord injuries, ALS, and other devastating conditions for which treatments and cures must still be found. We believe the strong federal oversight and ethical and enforceable guidelines in place surrounding embryonic stem cell research are effective. We support your efforts to oppose Initiative 26.

Sincerely,

Lisa Hughes, President
Coalition for the Advancement of Medical Research
www.camradvocacy.org