

**STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY**  
**HEARING ON CLONING**  
**MARCH 5, 2002**

Today we will explore the extraordinary new field of regenerative medicine.

With this promising therapy, the cure for diseases that have afflicted millions of Americans for generations is now within our grasp in our lifetimes – diseases that deprive people of their dignity, their careers, their ability to recognize even their own children, and even their very lives.

I believe that we owe it to our fellow citizens to do everything we can to encourage this extraordinary medical progress that brings such great hope to so many.

We will also hear today about the dangers of cloning a human being. We will learn that there are deep-seated moral and ethical objections to ever cloning a human child. I share these profound objections to cloning. Senator Feinstein and I have introduced a bill to make such cloning illegal. Senator Harkin and Senator Specter and Senator Campbell have introduced similar legislation, and many members of our committee have co-sponsored these bills.

But we must not confuse human cloning with regenerative medicine. One creates a person, and should be banned. The other provides a cure, and deserves our strong support.

Regenerative medicine involves transferring the genetic material from one human cell into another human cell in a laboratory dish. It does not involve reproducing a child or creating carbon copies of ourselves. In our opposition to human cloning, we must not make the grave mistake of denying to patients the hope that regenerative medicine brings. Enacting sweeping bans on regenerative medicine would delay the cures that are so urgently needed by patients in every community in America.

Many of us listened with close attention to the hearing on stem cells held in this committee last September. We heard that stem cells can serve as powerful healers for the human body. These extraordinary cells can generate new

heart muscle for those who have suffered cardiac damage, new pancreas cells for diabetics and new brain cells for those with Parkinson's Disease.

But a shadow looms over this research. A patient's body may reject the very cells intended to provide a cure. To unlock the potential of stem cell research, doctors are trying to reprogram stem cells with a patient's own genetic material. Using the breakthrough technique of nuclear transfer, each one of us could receive transplants or new cells perfectly matched to our own bodies. That is why this research is so important.

New science always brings new challenges and new debates. But we have proven in recent years that we can

balance the promise of science with the ethical demands of our society.

Some have said that this research will put women at risk by subjecting them to undue pressures to donate eggs. Our legislation addresses this concern by applying to all nuclear transfer research the same strict ethical standards used in research funded by the federal government. Many organizations representing women around the nation strongly reject any prohibitions on this important research.

I received a letter yesterday from the National Partnership for Women and Families, the American Association of University Women, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the Society for Women's Health Research. Far from wanting curbs on this research, they regard it as essential to ensuring the health of women. They write that nuclear transfer research "offers

hope to women struggling to care for parents with Alzheimer's disease or suffering after a stroke, children with juvenile diabetes, and husbands with heart disease...In our pursuit of better information, treatment, and cures for women and their families, we must ensure that the newest and most promising techniques are available."

In this committee, 25 years ago, we held hearings on whether to ban the basic techniques of biotechnology. Time after time, we heard of the medical advances that this new field of research would bring. Then – as now – some dismissed this promise as a pipe dream, and urged Congress

to forbid this new field of biotechnology because it seemed new or strange.

Congress rightly rejected those arguments and today patients across America enjoy breakthrough new biotechnology products that help dissolve clots in the arteries of stroke victims, fight leukemia, and help those with crippling arthritis lead active lives.

All of this would have been lost if Congress had banned the basic research in the 1970's.

During our previous debate on cloning in 1998, the Senate rejected legislation that would have enacted sweeping bans on vital medical research.



Congress was right to defeat unwarranted restrictions on life-saving research in the past, and we should reject a ban on regenerative medicine now. We should make sure that the research is done ethically, with appropriate oversight, so that women who donate eggs are informed of the risks and nature of the research in which they are participating. Science should always move forward hand in hand with ethics. But to deny patients the new medical miracles that come from research in regenerative medicine would be to deny lifesaving cures for future generations.