



UNIVERSITY
OF NEVADA
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Office of the Dean
Savitt Medical Building/332
Reno, Nevada 89557-0046

Letter to the Editor
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Yesterday, President Bush vetoed a bill to lift the current ban against federal funding of research using fetal tissue (HR 2507).

This ban was put in place during the Reagan administration, in spite of recommendations to the contrary from a scientific panel. Both the Senate and the House--including Sens. Reid and Bryan and Rep. Bilbray--voted to lift the ban as part of the NIH reauthorization bill.

The president sees this as a debate about abortion, but it is a debate about the ability to conduct research to help millions of Americans who suffer from Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, epilepsy, diabetes and other diseases.

President Bush's veto ensures that this successful research can only proceed on a piecemeal basis, in the private sector, with a negative taint. He proposes to create a fetal tissue bank with tissue obtained from miscarriages and ectopic pregnancies. Of course, this tissue often contains genetic and chromosomal defects that make it unacceptable for research.

We need to separate research policy from politics by encouraging our representatives to override the President's veto. I urge you to join me in doing so.

Robert M. Daugherty, M.D., Ph.D
Dean
University of Nevada School of Medicine

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