



## WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

May 22, 2006

The Honorable Jim Doyle  
Office of the Governor  
115 East State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Governor Doyle:

In light of your recent announcement regarding still more investment of public funds in bioscience tied to the destruction of human embryos, we write you in our capacity as President and Vice President of the Wisconsin Catholic Conference to express once more our grave concerns with this policy direction.

As we do so, let us emphasize once again that we do not condemn science or the pursuit of biotechnology. We respect the tremendous resource of human intellect present in our University. Indeed, we have every confidence that the brilliant people involved in this research can achieve scientific, medical and economic success by pursuing methods that do not destroy developing human life.

Especially troubling to us is the tendency, as reflected in Executive Order #147, to focus on the economic development value of embryonic stem cell research. Generally, support for research that involves destroying embryos is justified by the potential it holds to treat and cure illness, an understandable, but morally flawed justification. However, to justify such research on economic grounds takes the conversation in a disconcerting direction – a direction that further diminishes human embryos to mere commodities.

It would be much better if the Executive Order had expressed a preference for attracting research utilizing stem cells derived from means other than destroying embryos. Not only does such adult stem cell research resolve ethical concerns over the destruction of human life, it also shows greater promise for treatments and cures.

We understand that you and others have argued that politics should have no place in determining the future of this scientific research. If you mean politics in the sense of a narrow calculation of partisan advantage, we heartily agree.

But if by politics you mean the activity by which all in the community engage in a civic conversation about the means and ends of any enterprise done in the community's name with the community's money, then we must heartily disagree. For if the questions of whether and under what circumstances human life can be taken or subordinated to other purposes are not matters of public concern, it is difficult to identify what questions are.

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Though we admittedly speak from a sectarian religious perspective, we are not alone in this view. We recall that in the debate over the use of nuclear power, many have quoted Albert Einstein's assertion that "to the village square we must carry the facts of atomic energy; from there must come America's voice."

Einstein's words are as relevant to the discussion of how we use what we learn in biotechnology as they were to the discussion over the use we make of nuclear energy. And they call us to the best of our Wisconsin tradition. For if the *Wisconsin Idea* that the boundaries of our great University are those of the state means anything, it is that all of us in Wisconsin have a place in the conversation that determines the use we make of the knowledge we attain.

For all these reasons, we urge you to rethink our state's policy regarding the destruction of human embryos. We ask that you instead encourage an emphasis on research that is no less promising but much more consistent with our best ideals. Ultimately, policies that affirm and protect the dignity of exceptionally vulnerable members of our human family will truly move us forward.

Sincerely,



The Most Rev. Timothy M. Dolan  
Archbishop of Milwaukee



The Most Rev. Robert C. Morlino  
Bishop of Madison