

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY

Office of Media Relations

Bethesda, MD 20814 Fax: 301/634-7126

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Contact: Angela Hopp
301/634-7389 (office)
713/471-4541 (cell)
ahopp@asbmb.org

ASBMB reacts to dismissal of lawsuit against NIH over embryonic stem-cell research

BETHESDA, Md., July 28, 2011 – The American Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology issued a statement today commending the ruling made by Chief Judge Royce Lamberth of the U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., dismissing a lawsuit against the National Institutes of Health that challenged federal funding for embryonic stem-cell research.

Lamberth’s decision to overturn his own ruling in *Sherley v. Sebelius* that had banned the use of funds from NIH for human embryonic stem-cell research is a step toward increasing access to human stem-cell lines for potentially groundbreaking research, the society’s leadership insisted in its statement.

"Human embryonic stem cells offer the possibility of a renewable source of replacement cells and tissues to treat diseases including Parkinson's disease, spinal cord injury, stroke, burns, heart disease, diabetes, and arthritis," said ASBMB President Suzanne Pfeffer. "Much work will be needed before such therapies can even be tested, but I applaud Judge Lamberth for his decision that makes it possible for scientists to carry out the vital research needed today to understand these cells and work towards such possible treatments in the future."

ASBMB, which represents more than 12,000 biomedical researchers, released a statement earlier this month calling for passage of federal legislation to establish a uniform regulatory landscape for the derivation and use of human embryonic stem cells. Calling existing legislation "ambiguous" and citing and "the constant specter of judicial challenges" that researchers face, the society leadership insisted that the promises of embryonic stem cell research are in peril and the development of much-needed therapies and cures is being delayed.

In the earlier statement, Benjamin Corb, director of public affairs for ASBMB, noted that "a recent poll by the advocacy group Research! America showed that almost 70 percent of Americans approve of embryonic stem cell research."

To read the full statement in reaction to this week’s court ruling, visit <http://www.asbmb.org/uploadedFiles/Advocacy/ASBMB%20Position%20Statement%20on%20Human%20Embryonic%20Stem%20Cells.pdf>.

For more information about ASBMB’s advocacy efforts, contact Corb at bcord@asbmb.org or 240-283-6625.

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About the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

The ASBMB is a nonprofit scientific and educational organization with more than 12,000 members worldwide. Most members teach and conduct research at colleges and universities. Others conduct research in various government laboratories, at nonprofit research institutions and in industry. The Society's student members attend undergraduate or graduate institutions. For more information about ASBMB, visit www.asbmb.org.