



dedicated to finding a cure

For More information Contact:
Peter Cleary at (212) 479-7553 or pcleary@jdrf.org

Surprising National Survey Shows Conservative Voters Support Embryonic Stem Cell Science

***More “Support” than “Oppose” Embryonic Stem Cell Research;
Not an Important Factor in Deciding Whether to Vote for a Candidate***

New York, March 12, 2004 – In stark contrast to generally held perceptions about conservatives and stem cell research, conservative voters *are not* unanimously opposed to broadening embryonic stem cell research in the U.S., according to a poll made public today by the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. In fact, the study showed, a greater percentage of conservative voters polled support embryonic stem cell research than oppose it, and would favor a broadened policy for federal funding of scientific investigation using embryonic stem cells that would otherwise be discarded from fertility clinics.

In a national survey of conservative voters conducted late last year, 56% said they support medical research using stem cells obtained from embryos that are frozen in fertility clinics and will be discarded if they are not donated by the parents, compared with 36% who said they “oppose” or “strongly oppose it, and 8% who said they were unsure. Within that 56%, 34% said they “strongly supported” embryonic stem cell research, and 22% said they “somewhat supported” it.

Just as important, the poll showed, self-identified conservatives rank embryonic stem cell research low on the list of issues they would take into account in deciding whether to vote for a candidate. Only 1% of voters polled identified embryonic stem cell

research as a major factor in their electoral decision-making process, ranking it far behind taxes and spending (23%), jobs and the economy (16%), abortion (11%), military, defense and foreign policy (10%), terrorism and homeland security (9%), and education (8%).

To accurately gauge where conservative voters stand on the issue of embryonic stem cell research, JDRF commissioned a poll of 600 self-identified conservative voters. The margin for error was +/- 4%.

“What is most surprising is the range of opinion within American voters who have identified themselves as conservatives when it comes to understanding and supporting embryonic stem cell research,” said Peter Van Etten, President and Chief Executive Officer of JDRF. “While these voters are portrayed as being unanimously and vehemently opposed to expanding scientific investigation using stem cells, the results of this poll indicate that facts are very different from the perception; in fact, more conservatives polled already approve of embryonic stem cell research than oppose it, and a majority would approve expanding it.”

The results of the JDRF-sponsored poll were also surprising concerning the outlook of conservative voters when it came to a possible expansion of the current Administration position on federal funding for embryonic stem cell research. When asked if the policy on embryonic stem cell research in the U.S. should be broadened, contracted, or remain the same, almost twice as many conservatives agreed that the policy should be broadened (44%) as those who felt the policy should remain the same (23%) or be contracted (23%).

Respondents to the JDRF-sponsored poll described themselves as conservative (100%), who said they were aware of the issues surrounding embryonic stem cell research (61%). Some 70% said they always or most often vote in Republican primary elections, and 59% said they attend church or religious services at least once a week. The majority of respondents were between the ages of 35 and 54 (41%), with 53% of the total

men and 47% women. The South had the most concentrated area of respondents, representing 37% of those polled, followed by the Midwest (25%), the West (20%), and the Northeast (18%).

JDRF was founded in 1970 by the parents of children with juvenile (Type 1) diabetes – a disease that strikes suddenly, makes them insulin-dependent for life, and carries the constant threat of devastating complications. The world’s leading charitable funder and advocate of research leading to a cure, JDRF has provided more than \$680 million to diabetes research worldwide, including approximately \$300 million over the past three year alone. Consistently one of the top-rated foundations, more than 80 percent of JDRF’s annual expenditures directly support research and research-related education.

Survey Results

Political Viewpoint

100	Conservative
0	Liberal
0	Independent
0	All Other Responses

Support Medical Research Using Stem Cells From Embryos Frozen in Fertility Clinics

56	Total Support
36	Total Oppose
34	Strongly Support
22	Somewhat Support
9	Somewhat Oppose
28	Strongly Oppose
8	Unsure
1	Refused

Most Important Issues in Deciding Whether to Vote for Candidate for Senate or Congress

23	Taxes and Spending
16	Jobs and Economy
11	Abortion
10	Military, Defense and Foreign Policy
9	Terrorism and Homeland Security
8	Education
1	Embryonic Stem Cell Research
1	Environment
19	All
1	None
2	Did Not Know/Refused

Agree With Opinion on 2001 Policy Embryonic Stem Cell Research

23	There should be a ban on all embryonic stem cell research and no federal funding
23	We should continue to research only those stem cell groups developed from embryos destroyed in the past
44	Decision should be broadened to include federal funding for research on stem cells developed from excess embryos frozen in fertility clinics
8	Unsure
3	Refused