



For Immediate Release: May 23, 2005

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
Andrew Kohut, Director

Opinions Divide Along Religious Lines
MORE SEE BENEFITS OF STEM CELL RESEARCH

Coming on the heels of last week's announcement that South Korean scientists had cloned a human embryo, the U.S. House is nearing a vote on expanding federal funding of embryonic stem cell research. President Bush has threatened to veto the legislation if it passes. Surveys last year by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press found growing public interest in the issue, with majorities believing that the potential benefits of embryonic stem cell research outweigh the destruction of human embryos involved in this research.

In a poll of 2,000 adults conducted December 1-15, 2004 by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, nearly half of the public (47%) said it had heard a lot about the issue, up from 42% in August and 27% in March 2002. A clear majority of those polled (56%) said that it was more important to conduct stem cell research that might result in new medical cures than to avoid the loss the potential life of human embryos involved in this research (32%).

As in August of last year, people who say they have heard a lot about the issue are more supportive of stem cell research than those who are paying less attention. Among those who say they have heard a lot about the issue, 65% support stem cell research.

Growing Support for Stem Cell Research			
	March	Aug	Dec
<i>Stem cell debate:</i>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2004</u>
<i>Heard about...</i>	%	%	%
A lot	27	42	47
A little	52	43	41
Nothing at all	20	15	11
Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>1</u>
	100	100	100
<i>More important to...</i>			
Conduct research	43	52	56
Protect embryos	38	34	32
Don't know	<u>19</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>12</u>
	100	100	100

Opposition to stem cell research is greatest among white evangelical Protestants, 58% of whom believe that protecting potential life of embryos is more important. But mainline Protestants

are strongly in favor of the research, with 69% believing that stem cell research's benefits outweigh the costs. And despite Vatican objections to embryonic stem cell research, a solid majority of Catholics (63%) support such research.

Politically, the stem cell issue could prove beneficial for the Democratic Party. Fully two-thirds of Democrats (68%) favor stem cell research, but so too do 58% of independents. By contrast, Republicans are divided on the issue, with 45% favoring the research and 45% believing that it is more important to protect the potential life of embryos.

Similarly, self-described conservatives are divided (44% in favor, 45% against), while majorities of moderates and liberals are in favor.

There are modest generational differences in opinion on the issue. Younger people are more supportive of stem cell research than older people, with 61% of those age 18-29 favoring the research compared with just 50% among those 65 and older. But opposition is not higher among the oldest cohort; instead, older people are more likely to say they do not have an opinion on the issue.

Stem Cell Issue Divides along Religious, Political, and Generational Lines			
<i>Which is more important?</i>			
	New cures from stem cell <u>research</u>	Protecting human <u>embryos</u>	<u>DK</u>
Total	56	32	12=100
<i>Heard about issue</i>			
A lot	65	27	8=100
A little	51	35	14=100
Nothing at all	41	40	19=100
18-29	61	32	7=100
30-49	58	31	11=100
50-64	55	34	11=100
65+	50	32	18=100
Republican	45	45	10=100
Democrat	68	22	10=100
Independent	58	30	12=100
Conservative	44	45	11=100
Moderate	61	27	12=100
Liberal	77	16	7=100
Protestant	52	38	10=100
–White evangelical	33	58	9=100
–White mainline	69	19	12=100
–Black Protestant	47	36	17=100
Catholic	63	28	9=100
–White Catholic	63	28	9=100
Secular	70	16	14=100

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International among a nationwide sample of 2,000 adults, 18 years of age or older, from December 1-16, 2004. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 2.5 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

VIEWS ON STEM CELL RESEARCH

---March 2002---

---December 2004---

	More important to...			More important to...			<i>Change in Conduct research</i>
	Conduct	Not destroy	DK/Ref	Conduct	Not destroy	DK/Ref	
	<u>research</u>	<u>embryos</u>		<u>research</u>	<u>embryos</u>		
	%	%	%	%	%		
Total	43	38	19=100	56	32	12=100	+13
Sex							
Male	47	35	18	58	31	11	+11
Female	39	41	20	55	33	12	+16
Race							
White	44	38	18	58	32	10	+14
Non-white	36	40	24	51	32	17	+15
Black	31	43	26	48	33	19	+17
Hispanic*	43	45	12	54	34	12	+11
Race and Sex							
White Men	49	35	16	59	32	9	+10
White Women	40	41	19	57	32	11	+17
Age							
Under 30	46	40	14	61	32	7	+15
30-49	46	38	16	58	31	11	+12
50-64	40	40	20	55	34	11	+15
65+	34	36	30	50	32	18	+16
Sex and Age							
Men under 50	49	36	15	60	30	10	+11
Women under 50	43	42	15	58	32	10	+15
Men 50+	43	35	22	55	32	13	+12
Women 50+	33	40	27	51	34	15	+18
Education							
College Grad.	55	32	13	65	27	8	+10
Some College	46	38	16	56	32	12	+10
High School Grad.	34	44	22	54	34	12	+20
< H.S. Grad.	36	37	27	46	37	17	+10
Family Income							
\$75,000+	53	34	13	65	26	9	+12
\$50,000-\$74,999	53	37	10	59	34	7	+6
\$30,000-\$49,999	43	40	17	55	36	9	+12
\$20,000-\$29,999	40	43	17	53	34	13	+13
<\$20,000	33	44	23	52	36	12	+19

* The designation Hispanic is unrelated to the white-black categorization.

Question: All in all, which is more important.... Conducting stem cell research that might result in new medical cures OR Not destroying the potential life of human embryos involved in this research?

Continued on next page...

	----March 2002----			----December 2004----			<i>Change in Conduct research</i>
	More important to...		<u>DK/Ref</u> %	More important to...		<u>DK/Ref</u> %	
	<u>research</u> %	<u>embryos</u> %		<u>research</u> %	<u>embryos</u> %		
Total	43	38	19=100	56	32	12=100	+13
Region							
East	50	32	18	66	23	11	+16
Midwest	45	40	15	51	37	12	+6
South	35	45	20	50	38	12	+15
West	46	32	22	64	25	11	+18
Religious Affiliation							
Total White Protestant	38	43	19	52	38	10	+14
- Evangelical	26	55	19	33	58	9	+7
- Non-Evangelical	51	29	20	69	19	12	+18
White Catholic	43	39	18	63	28	9	+20
Secular	66	17	17	70	16	14	+4
Community Size							
Large City	45	35	20	--	--	--	--
Suburb	49	38	13	--	--	--	--
Small City/Town	42	36	22	--	--	--	--
Rural Area	35	47	18	--	--	--	--
Party ID							
Republican	38	47	15	45	45	10	+7
Democrat	45	37	18	68	22	10	+23
Independent	49	33	18	58	30	12	+9
Party and Ideology							
Conservative Republican	32	54	14	40	51	9	+8
Moderate/Liberal Rep.	48	38	14	55	35	10	+7
Conservative/Mod. Dem.	43	39	18	60	30	10	+17
Liberal Democrat	55	31	14	85	9	6	+30
Bush Approval							
Approve	--	--	--	46	42	12	--
Disapprove	--	--	--	69	21	10	--
Attend Religious Services							
Weekly +	28	52	19	38	50	12	+10
Monthly or Less	49	33	19	67	22	11	+18
Seldom/Never	58	24	18	72	18	10	+14
Labor Union							
Union Household	49	35	16	54	34	12	+5
Non-Union Household	42	39	19	57	32	11	+15