

CIRM Update (Part IV [Oct. 30, 2009])

Life Legal Defense Foundation remains committed to do all in its power to prevent the destruction of innocent human life that occurs through human embryonic stem cell research. You will recall that in previous email alerts we have spotlighted the use of California taxpayer dollars not only to fund embryonic stem cell research, but also attempts to use taxpayer dollars to “educate” the public about this research.

This email is the fourth in this series and will detail one of the grant funding programs that the Governing Board of CIRM has approved and how this grant program impacts the education of your children.

Training Grants \$77.5 million

The description of the Training Grants is to “Support pre-doctoral, post-doctoral and clinical fellow students in stem cell research labs.” LLDF challenged the initial round of Training Grants in litigation that also challenged CIRM’s authority and the constitutionality of Proposition 71. You may recall that the litigation concluded in 2007 when the California Supreme Court denied LLDF’s Petition for Review. The Court upheld CIRM’s structure as proper under the California Constitution, and also upheld the initial round of Training Grants as legitimate under Proposition 71’s purpose. The Court cited the fact that these education grants actually include a substantial amount of research since they fund mainly doctorate and post-doctorate level studies which necessarily involve research as part of the coursework.¹ Thus despite the name “Training Grant” and the admitted education which the grants involve, including ethics education, these grants have been considered to be within the purpose of Proposition 71.

There have so far been two rounds of Training Grants, the latest being in January 2009. Combined, the resources spent on this type of grant are \$77.5 million, for a total distribution of 31 grants.²

The Training Grants demonstrate the expansive view that has been taken of the limits of CIRM’s purpose, and therefore of its authority. Although upheld by the courts, these grants represent the first instance of CIRM expanding on the meaning of “research” to include substantial amounts of education. Unfortunately it has not been the last. California’s Senate Bill 471 was signed into law by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger on October 11, 2009. You may recall LLDF’s email alert on this bill when it was in the California Assembly back in July.

Stay Tuned . . .

The next email update will include an overview of the final version of SB 471, the California Stem Cell and Biotechnology Education and Workforce Development Act of 2009, signed into law by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger on Monday, October 11, 2009. This bill opens the door for CIRM to partner with the State Department of Education to teach California’s children about embryonic stem cell research and cloning.

¹ *Family Bio. v. Institute for Regen.*, 147 Cal.App.4th 1319, 1361 (2007).

² <http://www.cirm.ca.gov/GrantsSummary>.

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[Life Legal Defense Foundation](#), P.O. Box 2105, Napa CA 94558, (707) 224-6675

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