

CIRM Update (Part VI [Nov. 30, 2009])

The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine has stated that one of its goals is to “[e]ncourage the development of a ‘stem cell science culture’ in California by taking a leadership role in educating and informing the general public, including special interest groups and California students of all ages.”¹

This email is the sixth, and for now the last, in a series that you will be receiving, the purpose of which is to inform you of how CIRM funds—your taxpayer dollars—are being spent to educate you and your children.² Keep in mind that according to the text of Proposition 71, the governing board of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine does not have the authority to appropriate funds for grants or loans in any category other than research and facilities. Nowhere is funding for education or raising public support legally authorized.

Bridges to Stem Cell Research Grants **Cost: \$40 million**

CIRM describes the purpose of the “Bridges to Stem Cell Research” Grants on its website: “[To] train undergraduate and masters students in state-of-the-art stem cell research techniques.”³ The initial round of Bridges Grants was awarded January 1, 2009: \$40 million for 15 grants. From the descriptions provided by the successful grant applicants, it is apparent that these grants are for pure education, including in some instances education of the general public. They openly admit that part of the goal is to influence the next generation of voters in favor of ongoing stem cell research and to recruit young people into the field. The funding is aimed at education at a low enough academic level that minimal research could be involved, unlike the Training Grants which funded at least some doctoral and post-doctoral research. (The Training Grants were discussed in LLDF’s email of October 30, 2009 [http://lldf.org/articles/CIRM_SERIES_Sep2009]).

As one successful applicant’s program description states, “[in order] to . . . maintain government and public support for stem cell research, stem cell education needs to be accessible to all university students, since some students will become an integral part of the stem cell workforce and many others will make up the large body of future governing officials and voting voices.”⁴ Another indicates “The first [major goal] is educating the public about the medical, biological and technological advances of stem cell research and recruiting new scientists into the workforce.” As the description points out, an appreciation for stem cell biology and technology “will have a significant impact on our society given the role of the voting population in the funding and promoting of advanced technologies.”⁵

San Jose State University’s plan includes “increase[ing] awareness about scientific and societal issues related to stem cell biology and regenerative medicine among non-science majors.” This is to be achieved by “development of curricular materials appropriate for non-science majors to be included in a general education course. Materials developed for this course will be refined for wider online distribution and made available for inclusion in other biology courses at our university and elsewhere.”⁶

As these examples illustrate, a significant goal of the Bridges Grants is to influence public awareness and perception of stem cell research. While many State agencies take measures to educate the public as part of their operations, education emanating from CIRM will in all likelihood be biased in favor of conducting human embryonic stem cell research and will seek to persuade the public that such research is desirable and ethical since it is primarily embryonic stem cell research that CIRM was created to fund.⁷ What better way for CIRM to silence the voice of opposition to its wholesale destruction of human life than to persuade the voting population

that its programs are ethical?

The need to keep California lawmakers accountable for their use of public funds has never been more apparent. As CIRM's board of directors continues to spend taxpayer money on inappropriate attempts to shape the culture and values of Californians, LLDF will seek appropriate ways to limit these efforts so that none of the \$3 billion dollars CIRM is authorized to spend on stem cell research and facilities is used for the improper purpose of education — indoctrinating your children with the philosophy that it is ethical to destroy innocent human life.

¹ The Administrative and Operational Goals of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine, Strategic Plan Draft at p. 4 http://www.cirm.ca.gov/pub/pdf/DRAFT_2009_Strategic_Plan.pdf (emphasis added).

² Unless otherwise indicated, information has been taken from the Governance Subcommittees July 21, 2009 Meeting Agenda Item Summary Chart:

<http://www.cirm.ca.gov/sites/default/files/%23%204%20CHART%20for%207.21.09%20Gov%20Sub.072109%20Governance%20Contracts%20Summary%20.pdf>.

³ <http://www.cirm.ca.gov/GrantsSummary>.

⁴ <http://www.cirm.ca.gov/?q=node/235>.

⁵ <http://www.cirm.ca.gov/?q=node/237>.

⁶ <http://www.cirm.ca.gov/?q=node/367>.

⁷ CIRM recently announced that grant awards largely included funding for adult stem cell research, causing their spokesperson to effectively concede that adult stem cell research is the best in terms of producing results. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/29/health/research/29stem.html?_r=3

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