



IN THIS ISSUE – May 27, 2005: <http://www.faseb.org/opa/washington/>

- [Appropriations Update](#)
- [Hill Action](#)
- [Inside \(The Beltway\) Scoop](#)
- [Additional FASEB Activities](#)
- [Recent Hearings](#)
- [Congressional Schedule](#)

APPROPRIATIONS UPDATE

FY2006 Appropriations Process

The House Appropriations Committee has begun consideration of seven of its ten annual appropriations bills. The House's goal is to send all ten spending bills to the Senate by the July 4th recess. It appears that the House L/HHS Appropriations Subcommittee (which provides funding for NIH) plans to mark-up its bill the week of June 6, 2005. You may remember that Appropriations Committee Chairman Jerry Lewis (R-CA) provided an extra \$1 billion to the L/HHS subcommittee (as compared with the President's FY2006 budget). Unfortunately, even with the additional \$1 billion to spend, the L/HHS subcommittee will have \$163 million less to allocate in FY2006 than it appropriated in FY2005.

Senate Appropriations Committee FY2006 Allocation

Thad Cochran (R-MS), Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, still has not provided an overall allocation to each Senate appropriations subcommittee, commonly referred to as the 302(b) allocations process. He may decide to wait until the House approves its bills because it is tradition that the Senate does not take up its appropriations bills until the House approves theirs.

[Back to top](#)

HILL ACTION

House Passes Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2005

On May 24, 2005, the United States House of Representatives voted 238 to 194 in favor of H.R. 810, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2005. This legislation, sponsored by Representatives Michael Castle (R-DE) and Diana DeGette (D-CO) would expand the number of stem cell lines available for federal funding.

The arguments on the House floor pitted opponents who questioned the need for embryonic stem cell research and the destruction of life in light of advances from adult stem cell research against supporters who contended that embryonic stem cell research is needed because of the limitations of adult stem cell research.

During the debate, Majority Leader Tom Delay (R-TX) led the opposition arguing that embryonic stem cell research was immoral. Delay said that using leftover embryos from fertility clinics amounts to the "dismemberment of living, distinct human beings" because the embryos are destroyed during the research.

Supporters of the Castle bill, such as Congressman Charlie Bass (R-NH), argued that it was the right thing for America to do. "For America to stand back because of a moral principle and not allow sound scientific research to proceed under the umbrella of the National Institutes of Health, I think, is unconscionable."

While this victory was important, it was only the first step in achieving final passage of stem cell research legislation. The fight now moves to the Senate, where lawmakers will take up companion legislation S. 471, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2005. This legislation, sponsored by Senators Arlen Specter (R-PA), Orin Hatch (R-UT), Gordon Smith (R-OR), Tom Harkin (D-IA), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), and Ted Kennedy (D-MA), has 32 co-sponsors.

[Back to top](#)

INSIDE (the Beltway) SCOOP – Jon Retzlaff, Legislative Director

Passage of the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act in the House of Representatives is testament to the advocacy efforts of many patients and scientific groups, including FASEB's Office of Public Affairs and its society member scientists and staff. Gary Kline, FASEB's Legislative Analyst, spearheaded an effort to reach out to dozens of House Members and staff. Mr. Kline sought out potential "yes" votes from House Representatives who serve on the Republican Main Street Partnership Board, a group of fiscally conservative deficit hawks. Mr. Kline also identified first-term House Members who appeared to have an open-mind on this issue. He coordinated meetings with society public affairs staff to educate Members and their staff on the importance of stem cell research. In addition, Mr. Kline facilitated the effort to request FASEB society members to urge their respective Representative to support the stem cell bill.

The commitment and enthusiasm of FASEB society member scientists was on full display during the stem cell debate as thousands sent e-mails to their respective Member of Congress requesting them to vote for the Castle/DeGette stem cell bill. One particularly dedicated FASEB society member scientist (Dr. Bettie Sue Masters from the University of Texas

Health Science Center at San Antonio), took time out from the Nitric Oxide Gordon Conference in Il Ciocco, Italy, to send her Congressman an e-mail requesting that he vote to allow NIH to support additional stem cell lines.

Dr. Carrie Wolinetz, FASEB's Associate Director for Communications, also contributed substantially to this important victory for science. Dr. Wolinetz developed numerous materials in support of stem cell research and (at the request of staff from Representative Castle's and DeGette's office) provided cogent arguments to rebut misleading information from stem cell opponents.

The fact that the leadership in the House of Representatives even allowed a vote on the stem cell issue is quite surprising. Prior to the beginning of the 109th Congress, House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL) enunciated a policy in which the House would pass bills only if a majority of House Republicans backed them, regardless of how many Democrats favored them. Hastert's rule to allow bills to reach the House floor only if a "majority of the majority" supported them was not followed on the stem cell legislation (50 Republicans joined 187 Democrats and 1 Independent to support the measure, while 180 Republicans and 14 Democrats voted against the bill).

Provided that the Senate also passes the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, President Bush has indicated that he intends to veto the bill.

[Back to top](#)

ADDITIONAL FASEB ACTIVITIES

FASEB Participates in Stem Cell Meeting

On May 23, 2005, Jon Retzlaff, FASEB's Director of Legislative Relations, participated in the final strategy session prior to Tuesday's stem cell vote. Elizabeth Wenk, Deputy Chief of Staff for Representative Michael Castle (R-DE) and Meghan Taira, Health Policy Director for Representative Diana DeGette (D-CO) facilitated a discussion with lobbyists and leaders from patient advocacy organizations and scientific groups. Participants shared intelligence on how certain Members were inclined to vote and discussed strategy for framing the debate.

[Back to top](#)

RECENT HEARINGS

Senate Public Works & Environment Committee on Ecoterrorism

The Senate Committee on the Environment and Public Works held a hearing on ecoterrorism on May 18, including discussions regarding the actions of extremist animal rights (AR) groups. FASEB sent a [letter](#) in support of the hearing to Chairman Inhofe (R-OK). Overall, the views of the Senators were sharply divided down party lines. Chairman Inhofe and Senator Vitter (R-LA) expressed concern that environmental and AR extremists were a serious problem that needed to be addressed, while Senators Jeffords (I-VT) and Lautenberg (D-NJ) thought the committee

should focus on other issues and were concerned that the legal activities of mainstream environmental groups would be infringed upon. Senator Lautenberg became quite adversarial during the course of the hearing, and expressed the view that while he did not condone the actions of ELF, ALF and SHAC, he did not consider them terrorism. Lautenberg named a number of other special interest groups (i.e. – anti-abortion groups) and crimes (i.e. – hate crimes) that he felt should be a greater priority for the FBI. John Lewis, Deputy Assistant Director of the FBI testified that the number of crimes associated with ELF-ALF, etc. far exceeds those of other special interest groups associated with domestic terrorism. Lewis stated repeatedly that it has only been a matter of luck that no one has been killed by ELF-ALF-SHAC activities. Senator Lautenberg's comments came close to dismissing the use of animals in research altogether, but ultimately he did state that if one of his children or grandchildren were ill with cancer, he would value saving their lives above that of a lab rat. Testimony and statements may be found [here](#).

[Back to top](#)

CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE

Congress will be on recess for Memorial Day until June 6, 2005.

[Back to top](#)

FASEB's Washington Update is brought to you bi-monthly by the FASEB Office of Public Affairs. We welcome your questions and comments – please contact Gary Kline, Legislative Analyst at gkline@faseb.org or (202) 543-1155. For more information about how to get involved in research advocacy, visit: <http://capwiz.com/faseb/home/>