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## Brown back stem cell bill at eleventh hour

07nov06

AUSTRALIAN Greens senator Bob Brown has made a last minute decision to support a bill that would overturn a ban on therapeutic cloning.

But Senator Brown, who was previously undecided on the legislation that will allow scientists to clone embryos to extract their stem cells, has urged that parliament keep a close watch on the work of scientists.

"Are we doing good, or are we doing harm?" Senator Brown asked the Senate this morning in outlining the reasons why he would back the legislation. "In the end I have come to the conclusion that this legislation will do more good than harm."

Senator Brown said his vote for the legislation should not be taken as a sign he believed scientists were the best people to decide wrong and right, pointing out that it was scientists who had created some of the world's most terrifying weapons.

"For those who might think that scientists are the best people to make ethical judgments, I disagree," Senator Brown said.

"The very fact that we have a one trillion dollar armaments industry on this planet flowing out of science, with everything from cluster bombs through to hydrogen bombs, shows shows that that is not so.

"We are at an age where we have many moral dilemmas in which we have failed. The war in Iraq is a very clear example of that, the destruction of forests around the planet, the failure to deal with climate change.

"When it comes to experimentation with the very basics of human fabric, that is our own selves, the very basis of life, that is the cells that make up all life on this planet, we have to be extraordinarily cautious."

But Senator Brown said he had concluded that the legislation had the potential to make some people's lives much better.

"I think that this legislation does have the ability to improve the general wellbeing and happiness of people not just in our own country, but around the world," he said.

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