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### **Supporters hail stem cell legislation. 07/12/2006. ABC News Online**

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**Last Update:** Thursday, December 7, 2006. 1:00am (AEDT)



## **Supporters hail stem cell legislation**

Supporters of embryonic stem cell research have welcomed a decision by the Federal Parliament to lift the ban on therapeutic cloning.

The legislation allows scientists to create cloned human embryos for research purposes. (ABC-TV)

Senator Kay Patterson's private member's Bill to lift the ban passed the Lower House last night without amendment.

The Bill allows embryos up to 14 days old to be cloned for scientific research.

Senator Patterson says the research will assist in the understanding and treatment of disease.

"It will enable Australia to stay at the forefront of biomedical research," she said.

"I know it's been a very, very difficult topic for many people and what I wanted to say was that I thought the debate was of a very high level."

Liberal MP Mal Washer says the Bill offers hope to people with serious illness.

"What it's great for is our kids and grandkids out there. They have now the opportunity because we've opened up this kind of research to possibly have a better life than some of us," he said.

But Family First Senator Steve Fielding is disappointed with the result, saying cloning cannot provide the cures that are hoped for.

"There's no proof that cloning human embryos will produce the cures we all desire," he said.

"I think that Parliament should have voted against human cloning."

MPs were allowed a conscience vote on the issue and both the Prime Minister, John Howard, and Opposition Leader, Kevin Rudd, voted against the Bill.

## **Lockhart Review**

The Bill is based on the recommendations of the Lockhart Review.

Justice John Lockhart chaired the review committee which supported an expansion of

embryonic stem cell research.

His widow, Juliet Lockhart, was in Parliament last night to see the Bill being passed.

She says her husband would be pleased.

"If scientists aren't given the opportunities within strict guidelines and within the law to do their research then we're just never going to move forward," she said.

"It's a very delicate matter. I hope there'll be answers soon, though of course I have no idea.

"But at least they have the go ahead to keep working."

### **In other developments:**

- The federal House of Representatives has voted to lift the ban on therapeutic cloning. ([Full Story](#))

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