



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

March 10, 2009
For Immediate Release

CATHOLIC CONFERENCE COMMENTS ON PRESIDENT'S STEM CELL DECISION

Wisconsin Catholic Conference Executive Director John Huebscher made the following comment regarding President Obama's decision to loosen federal restrictions on research using embryonic stem cells.

"The President's decision, though deeply disappointing, is not a surprise given his earlier statements on the issue. His action may provide a legal legitimacy to the activity of destroying embryos for research purposes. But it cannot confer moral legitimacy to the practice of destroying human life.

The debate over the ethics of embryonic stem cell policy does not end with this decision. It will continue in the short term as Congress decides whether to continue the Dickey-Wicker amendment that bans the use of federal funds for embryonic stem cell research in which human embryos are created, destroyed, discarded, or knowingly subjected to risk of injury or death. The debate will continue in the long run until the value of human life is given its rightful place in all scientific research.

As the bishops of Wisconsin wrote last year in their pastoral letter on stem cell research "We are not seeking to impose narrow doctrinal beliefs, but rather to propose reasonable standards for the protection of human life and dignity."

Winning public support for such protection will require Catholics to be prophetic in our advocacy. Ours must be a prophecy of persuasion that is both resolute and resourceful as we engage our fellow citizens in debate."

-30-

For more information: Contact John Huebscher, 608/257-0004.