

## News

### Stem cell veto angers students, professors

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President Bush used his veto power for the first time in his presidency Wednesday when he struck down H.R. 810, a bill that would have increased federal funding for stem cell research. The veto, which Bush followed with a speech to 18 families who had adopted frozen embryos and raised children from them, caused some contention at Dartmouth, where several professors and a student group identify as strong supporters of the bill.

The bill had passed in the House of Representatives and in the Senate last Tuesday, but Bush had previously stated that he would veto the legislation if it ever landed on his desk.

"It has set [stem cell research] back five or six years by depriving it of support of federal money and oversight," professor Ronald Green, faculty director of the Dartmouth College Ethics Institute, said of the veto.

A year ago, Green testified in favor of the bill before a Senate subcommittee.

"What [Bush] has done is terribly unfortunate...To exercise his only veto in a way that is pointless," Green said.

Laura Myers '08, president of the recently-founded Student Society for Stem Cell Research, has been involved in lobbying for the bill and was also disappointed with President Bush's veto.

"He is trying to appeal to his social conservatives to whom he promised this in 2001," she said.

The SSSCR traveled to a stem cell conference at Stanford earlier this summer and faxed a letter to Senate Majority Leader and medical doctor Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) asking him to bring the issue to the Senate floor.

Myers and Green, as well as biology professor Roger Sloboda, believe Bush's veto was a political move.

"I thought it was stupid," Sloboda said. "[It shows a] total disregard for people's suffering from diseases that have the potential to be cured or mitigated by the results of stem cell research.

"I think Bush was pandering to the religious right wing of the Republican party that people want to vote Republican in the next election," he said.

Green and Sloboda, both professors of biology at the College, are confident that stem cell research could yield promising outcomes for patients.

"The day is going to come when we have organs made to order," Green said. "It's going to completely transform medicine."


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But Edward Berger of the biology department, who is the faculty advisor for SSSCR, warns that stem cell research also has possible drawbacks.

"I am for it but I understand that as scientists we generally tend to overestimate the value of something and underestimate the problems associated with it," he said, citing a study that found that many cancers originate from stem cells.

He further cautioned against heedless use of stem cells in treatment, but not on the moral grounds President Bush used to support his veto.

"There is a risk associated with injecting large amounts of stem cells into [a] person," Berger said. 

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