

Reid answers questions about stem cell research



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U.S. Senator Harry Reid expressed his support for stem cell research on Tuesday.

Tribune/Debra Reid

BY NICK COLTRAIN

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"Why do we need to wait for a new president? Why do we need to wait for a veto-proof Congress?"

U.S. Senator Harry Reid asked those questions during Tuesday's press conference to let Nevadans know, despite President George W. Bush's veto of a pro-stem cell research bill, the fight isn't over.

Reid spoke at the Northern Nevada Center for Independent Living, a center for disabled people, as part of a democratic initiative supporting stem cell after the House of Representatives refused to override the President's veto loosening federal restrictions on stem cell research.

He invited Patrick Flanagan, a quadriplegic candidate for district court judge, to speak as well.

Reid and Flanagan talked about the potential stem cell research has to cure diseases ranging from diabetes and Parkinson's disease to spinal cord injuries like Flanagan's.

Flanagan became wheelchair bound in 2001 after he was clipped by a truck while riding his bike. He said he would be a prime candidate for stem cell research because the damaged area is only two

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— Patrick Flanagan
Candidate, Washoe County
District Court Judge

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millimeters in size.

"People don't understand how close we are to regaining our independence," he said. "We're not asking for the impossible. I'm just asking for the opportunity to walk my daughter down the aisle at her wedding."

Reid said stem cell research gives hope to millions of Americans like Flanagan, and has always been a top issue for him. He pointed out the bipartisan support for the pro-research bill, and said it was a shame the House of



Tribune/**Debra Reid**

District Court judge candidate Patrick Flanagan, left, and U.S. Senator Harry Reid spoke on the need for stem cell research on Tuesday.

Representatives wouldn't override the President's veto.

John Rosenlund, a paraplegic for almost 10 years, said he couldn't

comment on the veto without reading the bill, but Reid carried a positive message.

"They've been talking about it since I was hurt ...

and I don't think they've done anything with it," said Rosenlund, a worker at the Northern Nevada Center for Independent

See **Reid** page 6A

REID

from page 1A

Living. "I think stem cell research is a good idea."

Reid said 80 percent of the American public support stem cell research and there are already 40,000 frozen stem cell

embryos around the country.

"We can start throwing them in the garbage or taking some of them and doing research," Reid said.

He said the bill's chances lie either in Congress getting enough supporters of stem cell research during the upcoming election to override

a veto or a public loud enough to change the President's mind. Reid said he couldn't do it.

When asked about plans of discussing the bill with the President, Reid responded with a laugh, "the President's not in the business of meeting with me."



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August 09, 2006

Nevada senator calls stem cell research his No. 1 issue

By **TOM GARDNER**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SPARKS, Nev. (AP) - Nevada Sen. Harry Reid says funding for stem cell research is "one of the most important things I've ever worked on in my entire career," and predicted a stem cell bill would eventually win approval in Congress.

"The president's veto is not the final word," Reid said of the stem cell research legislation rejected by President Bush last month.

The Senate Democratic leader made his remarks during a brief appearance Tuesday at the Center for Independent Living, a service provider for people with disabilities.

He said the president still had time to work with Congress to pass a stem cell research funding bill.

"Do I think that he'll do that? No. But do I think that he should do it? Yes," Reid said.

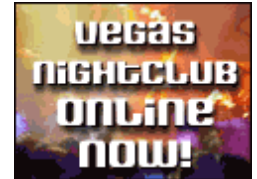
Bush used the first veto of his presidency on July 19 to reject legislation that could have multiplied the federal money going into research on embryonic stem cells, which some conservatives consider to be early human life. A few hours later, the House voted 235-193 to overturn Bush's veto, 51 votes shy of the required two-thirds majority.

"This bill would support the taking of innocent human life in the hope of finding medical benefits for others," Bush said.

Reid scoffed at that on Tuesday.

"Are we better off with 400,000 embryos thrown into the garbage, as happens or are we better off having these frozen embryos given to science?" Reid said.

"It's the hope - the hope for diabetes, the hope for Parkinson's, it's hope for the people with spinal cord injuries and President Bush snuffed that out with the signing of a pen."



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Tucker Bounds, a spokesman for the Republican National Congressional Committee in Washington, said Reid's criticism was off base.

"Reid apparently forgets to mention that President Bush is the first President in American history to devote federal dollars to stem cell research, just like Reid forgets that before he was caught with his hand in the cookie jar his 'top priority' was 'honest government,'" Bounds said.

Reid, D-Nev., was flanked at his appearance by Mylan Hawkins, executive director of the Nevada Diabetes Association for Children and Adults and Patrick Flanagan, a candidate for district court judge who suffers from a spinal cord injury.

Flanagan said he's convinced stem cell research could help him rise up from his wheelchair.

"I am not asking for something that's impossible and I am not asking for some kind of miracle. But I am asking for any research that could one day help me achieve one wish: That I may walk my daughter down the aisle at her wedding."

"We're going to continue pushing this. I believe in my heart it's one of the most important things I've ever worked on in my entire career," Reid said.

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