



**Testimony**  
**E2SSB 5581 – Life Sciences Discovery Fund**  
**House Technology, Energy, and Communication Committee**  
**March 29, 2005**

Good Afternoon Mr. Chair and members of the Committee. My name is Matt Muckler and I am the Legislative Director for the Washington State Catholic Conference, which represents the Catholic bishops of the State of Washington on public policy issues.

We are very concerned with the suffering of people with debilitating diseases, and care for the sick is a ministry to which we are dedicated across the state of Washington. To alleviate suffering, the Catholic Church supports adult stem cell research as a morally acceptable means of achieving medical progress. Adult stem cell research is a promising source of scientific knowledge that has already helped hundreds of thousands of patients.

We have two main concerns with E2SSB 5581. First, we are concerned that the medical research is going forward without the ethical concerns being resolved. In order to obtain embryonic stem cells, it is required that a human embryo is destroyed. In the Church's view, human life, including embryonic human life, deserves full respect and protection at every stage of development. The potential for scientific advancement does not justify an immoral act, in this case the destruction of a human embryo to extract stem cells.

Our second concern is a fiscal concern. We believe that this bill could divert over \$350 million from low-income citizens who currently lack access to basic health care services.

While we are encouraged that the Senate passed an amendment on this bill that would attempt to ban human cloning, we believe this language needs clarification in order to produce its desired effect. At this time, we would ask for your opposition to E2SSB 5581. Thank you for your consideration.