Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 16, 2005

Dear Colleague:

When announcing his policy to restrict federally-funded stem cell research, President Bush assured the nation that the "more than 60" available cell lines would sustain research and "lead to breakthrough therapies and cures."

However, this claim was based on a spurious estimate of the number of lines. An honest appraisal of the stock revealed that only a fraction of the stem cell lines was suitable for this critical research. Today, only 22 lines are eligible, and there are concerns that even these lines may be contaminated. Federally funded scientists are barred from doing research on a diversity of stem cell lines that are being developed in the private sector and overseas.

The stem cell case is a clear illustration of why we need access to the best possible scientific information in order to address the many challenges facing our nation. Politically doctored facts do not lead to sound policy.

That is why we urge you to support H.R. 839, a bill to "Restore Scientific Integrity to Federal Research and Policymaking." The bill would prohibit interference with science on global warming and other scientific issues of national significance. It would:

- Ban obstructing scientific research, censoring federal scientists, and disseminating false or misleading scientific information.
- Protect federal whistleblowers who disclose allegations of political interference with science.
- Strengthen the integrity and independence of federal scientific advisory committees by prohibiting appointments based on political litmus tests and adding protections against conflict of interests.
- Ensure that federal science-based agencies — not the White House — establish the standards for peer review of agency science.

We have attached a fact sheet on the Administration's record of tampering with the science of stem cell research. If you would like more information or would like to cosponsor H.R. 839, please contact Christopher Davis at (202) 225-5051.

Sincerely,

Henry A. Waxman
Member of Congress

Louise McIntosh Slaughter
Member of Congress