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## **Cloning Opposed, Stem Cell Research Narrowly Supported** **PUBLIC MAKES DISTINCTIONS ON GENETIC RESEARCH**

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**Cloning Opposed, Stem Cell Research Narrowly Supported**  
**PUBLIC MAKES DISTINCTIONS ON GENETIC RESEARCH**

The public draws clear lines in assessing complex issues raised by genetic technologies. Americans are united in opposition to human cloning – by more than four-to-one (77%-17%), they reject scientific experimentation in this area. There is far less agreement on the question of stem cell research. Half of those who have been paying at least some attention to the issue favor government funding for stem cell research, but a substantial minority (35%) are opposed. By a narrower margin (47%-39%), those who have been paying attention say conducting stem cell research is more important than not destroying the potential life of embryos involved in such research.

The nationwide survey of 2,002 adults by the Pew Research Center and the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life finds that support for federal funding of stem cell research has eroded somewhat since last August. Among all respondents, regardless of whether they have heard anything about the issue, 43% back federal funding for this research, compared with 55% who expressed that view in a Gallup poll from last August.

Equally important, there are key differences in the strength of opinion, with the stem cell opponents holding a decided edge. Nearly half (46%) of those who believe it is more important to conduct stem cell research, despite its potential for destroying embryos, say they could imagine changing their minds on this issue. By contrast, stem cell opponents – largely driven by their deep religious beliefs – are more committed to their positions. Fewer than a quarter (23%) say they could see themselves changing their minds and taking the view that medical cures arising from stem cell research are more important than the potential life of human embryos.

<b>Two Views on Genetic Research</b>	
	March
<i>Scientific experiments on human cloning</i>	<u>2002</u>
Favor	17
Oppose	77
Don't know	<u>6</u>
	100
<i>Govt funding for stem cell research*</i>	
Should fund	50
Should not	35
Depends (Vol)	5
Don't know	<u>10</u>
	100
<i>Which is more important*</i>	
Conducting research toward medical cures	47
Not destroying human embryos	39
Don't know	<u>14</u>
	100
* Based on those who have heard at least a little about this issue.	

Religious commitment is the most important factor influencing attitudes of opponents of stem cell research. While white evangelical Protestants stand out as the group most opposed to federal funding for stem cell research, this opposition is largely limited to highly-committed white evangelical Protestants, who oppose federally-funded stem cell research by three-to-one (58%-19%).<sup>1</sup>

In contrast to the divisions over stem cell research, more than seven-in-ten in every religious group oppose experimentation into human cloning. Moreover, the opposition largely arises from moral objections, not concerns over the safety of cloning. While white evangelical Protestants are more likely than others to cite moral concerns, majorities in every group base their opposition to cloning on the belief that it is morally wrong. Even seculars, who oppose research on the cloning of human beings by 56%-33%, are more influenced by moral beliefs than by safety concerns.

***College Grads Favor Stem Cell Research***

People with high levels of religious commitment are less supportive of federal funding for stem cell research than are those with weaker religious commitment. Aside from white evangelical Protestants, this pattern is most striking among African-Americans. Blacks in general support federal funding in this area, but highly-committed religious African-Americans are opposed (48%-39%).

<b>Federal Funding for Stem Cell Research</b>			
	<u>Should</u>	<u>Should not</u>	<u>Depends/ DK/Ref</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
All following issue*	50	35	15=100
White (Total)	50	35	15=100
White Evangelical	33	47	20=100
<b>High**</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>23=100</b>
Low**	49	35	16=100
White Mainline	59	27	14=100
High	51	29	20=100
Low	65	26	9=100
White Catholic	51	33	16=100
High	44	36	20=100
Low	57	32	11=100
Black (Total)	48	37	15=100
<b>High</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>13=100</b>
Low	61	22	17=100
Hispanic (Total)	49	39	12=100
High	40	44	16=100
Low	62	32	6=100
Secular***	64	23	13=100

\*Analysis based on those who have heard at least a little about the stem cell debate in Washington.

\*\*Groups are divided into “high” and “low” levels of religious commitment based on how often individuals pray, attend religious services, and the importance of religion in their lives.

\*\*\*Seculars include atheists, agnostics and those with no religious preference who rarely, if ever, attend religious services.

<sup>1</sup> “Evangelical” Protestants are those who think of themselves as born again or evangelical Christians. “Mainline” Protestants are those who do not think of themselves in these terms.

Aside from religion, political conservatives and those with the least formal education are most likely to oppose stem cell research. Nearly two-thirds of college graduates think the government should fund stem cell research, while just a quarter disagree. But among people who did not complete high school, just 35% favor government funding for stem cell research, while 46% are opposed.

And while 69% of liberals favor government funding for stem cell research, just 38% of political conservatives agree. Despite the overwhelming ideological differences on the issue, however, there is only a modest partisan gap. Republicans are divided on stem cell funding (45% in favor vs. 41% opposed). Democrats are slightly more supportive (55%-31%).

	<u>Should</u> %	<u>Should not</u> %	<u>Depends/ DK/Ref</u> %
Total	50	35	15=100
College grad	64	25	11=100
Some college	51	33	16=100
H.S. grad	41	43	16=100
Less than H.S.	35	46	19=100
Conservative	38	45	17=100
Moderate	55	31	14=100
Liberal	69	22	9=100

Analysis based on those who have heard at least a little about the stem cell debate in Washington.

***Supporters Cite Media, Education***

The vast majority of those who support government funding of stem cell research are influenced by what they have seen in the media (42%) or their education (28%). Religion plays a relatively minor role in shaping the views of supporters – just 5% cite it as having the biggest influence on their thinking.

By contrast, 37% of those who think the government should not fund stem cell research cite religious beliefs as their biggest influence. This is particularly the case among white evangelical Protestants, fully 55% of whom explain their opposition to stem cell research in terms of their religious beliefs. Just 31% and 27% of white mainline Protestants and white Catholics, respectively, cite religious beliefs in explaining their opposition to stem cell funding.

<i>Biggest influence on attitudes</i>	<u>Total</u> %	<i>Government funding for stem cell research</i>	
		<u>Favor</u> %	<u>Oppose</u> %
Seen/Read in media	36	42	29
Education	21	28	12
Religious beliefs	19	5	37
Personal experience	8	10	4
Friends and family	3	4	3
Something else	11	10	12
Don't know	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	100	100

Analysis based on those who have heard at least a little about the stem cell debate in Washington.

### ***Unmovable Opposition***

Though almost evenly divided overall, there is a significant disparity in how firmly Americans favor or oppose stem cell research. Overall, 43% say that conducting stem cell research that might result in new medical cures is more important than protecting human embryos involved with this research. However, nearly half (46%) of those who feel this way also say they can imagine themselves placing a higher priority on not destroying the potential life of human embryos.

<i>Imagine thinking differently?</i>	<i>Which is more important?</i>	
	<u>Conducting research</u>	<u>Protecting embryos</u>
	%	%
Can	46	23
Can't	47	69
Don't know	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>
	100	100
Number of cases	(777)	(637)

Analysis based on those who have heard at least a little about the stem cell debate in Washington.

Among the 38% who already believe that protecting the potential life of human embryos is more important than medical research on stem cells, fully two-thirds say they cannot imagine changing their minds on this issue, and just 23% say they could see themselves ever thinking that discovering medical cures from stem cell research is more important.

### ***No to Cloning Research***

The majority of people oppose research on human cloning on moral grounds. Overall, 55% of Americans oppose cloning research because they see it as morally wrong, compared with just 15% who frame their objections in terms of the science not being safe enough. Put in other terms, nearly three-quarters of those who oppose cloning research object on moral grounds.

	<u>Total</u>	-----White-----			Black	
		<u>Evang.</u>	<u>Mainline Catholic</u>	<u>Protest.</u>	<u>Protest.</u>	<u>Secular</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Favor	17	8	15	18	13	33
Oppose	77	88	79	75	81	56
Science not safe	15	9	18	14	14	18
Morally wrong	55	71	53	54	63	32
Don't know	7	8	8	7	4	6
Don't know	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>11</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100

White evangelical Protestants, 88% of whom oppose cloning experimentation, are the most likely to explain their opposition in moral terms. Moral opposition is also highest among women, older Americans, and those with no more than a high school diploma.

## ABOUT THIS SURVEY

Results for the survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates among a nationwide sample of 2,002 adults, 18 years of age or older, during the period February 25 - March 10, 2002. Based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus 2.5 percentage points. For results based on either Form 1 (N=1,058) or Form 2 (N=944), the sampling error is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS  
& PEW FORUM ON RELIGION AND PUBLIC LIFE  
2002 RELIGION AND PUBLIC LIFE SURVEY  
FINAL TOPLINE  
February 25 - March 10, 2002  
N = 2002**

And one last subject...

**ASK ALL:**

Q.51 Do you favor or oppose scientific experimentation on the cloning of human beings?

17	Favor
77	Oppose
<u>6</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

**IF 2 'OPPOSE' IN Q.51 ASK [N=1530]:**

Q.52 Is your objection to research on human cloning based more on **[READ AND ROTATE]**

19	The belief that the science is not yet safe enough but could be in the future
72	The belief that it is morally wrong
6	Both equally ( <b>VOL -- DO NOT READ</b> )
2	Other ( <b>VOL -- DO NOT READ</b> )
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

**ASK ALL:**

Q.53 As you may know, the federal government has debated whether to fund certain kinds of medical research known as 'stem cell research' ... How much have you heard about this? **[READ, IN ORDER]**

27	A lot
52	A little [OR]
20	Nothing at all
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q.54 Do you think the federal government should or should not fund stem cell research?

		<i>Gallup</i> <u>Aug 2001</u>
43	Should	55
35	Should not	29
4	Depends (VOL)	3
<u>18</u>	No opinion	<u>13</u>
100		100

**IF ANSWER GIVEN (1,2,3) IN Q.54, ASK: [N=1667]**

Q.55 Which one of the following has had the biggest influence on your thinking on this issue... **[READ IN ORDER]**

		<b>BASED ON ...</b>	
		<u>Should</u>	<u>Should not</u>
7	A personal experience	10	4
4	The views of your friends and family	4	3
34	What you have seen or read in the media	41	27
18	Your religious beliefs	5	34
22	Your education	28	13
13	OR Something else	11	15
<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>
100		100	100
		<b>(N=906)</b>	<b>(N=672)</b>

**ASK ALL:**

Q.56 All in all, which is more important... **[READ, IN ORDER]**

43	Conducting stem cell research that might result in new medical cures [OR]
38	Not destroying the potential life of human embryos involved in this research
<u>19</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

**IF 1 IN Q.56 ASK [N=873]:**

Q.57 Can you ever imagine yourself thinking that protecting human embryos is more important than conducting medical research on stem cells, or can't you imagine changing your mind on this issue?

46	Can imagine thinking differently on this issue
45	Can't imagine changing mind on this issue
<u>9</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

**IF 2 IN Q.56 ASK [N=761]:**

Q.58 Can you ever imagine yourself thinking that discovering medical cures from stem cell research is more important than the potential life of human embryos, or can't you imagine changing your mind on this issue?

23	Can imagine thinking differently on this issue
67	Can't imagine changing mind on this issue
<u>10</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	