



House
Democratic
Policy
Committee

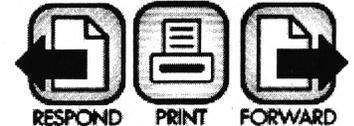
NEWS RELEASE

State Rep. Stephen H. Stetler
D-York

Chairman, Democratic Policy Committee
www.pahouse.com/stetler/#policy_hearings

CONTACT: James M. Dawes
Democratic Policy Committee
Phone: 717-705-2051
Fax: 717-772-9949
E-Mail: jdawes@pahouse.net

Hearing Host: State Rep. Dan B. Frankel
D-Allegheny
www.pahouse.com/frankel



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HDPC learns more about stem cell research

PITTSBURGH, Aug. 3 – The House Democratic Policy Committee held a public hearing today at the University of Pittsburgh to learn more about stem cell research's impact in Pennsylvania, according to HDPC Chairman Stephen H. Stetler, D-York.

Requested and hosted by state Rep. Dan Frankel, D-Allegheny, the hearing featured testimony by Dr. Calvin Johnson, secretary, state Health Department; Dr. John Gearhart, armstrong professor of medicine, John Hopkins University's McKusick-Nathans Institute of Genetic Medicine; Dr. Alan Russell, director, University of Pittsburgh's McGowan Institute for Regenerative Medicine; Rebecca Bagley, deputy secretary for technology investment, state Department of Community and Economic Development; Fritz Bittenbender, president, Pennsylvania Bio; Dr. Ronald Cole-Turner, professor, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary; Ralph Capone, MD, fellow, American College of Physicians; and Julene Fabrizio, president, National Ovarian Cancer Coalition.

"As a co-chairman of the House Life Sciences Caucus, I know how important stem cell research is to Pennsylvania," Stetler said. "With our state's world-class research institutions, this growing research will become an integral part of our state's economy while helping to save many lives."

Frankel added, "Stem cell research can be a controversial issue, but it is important to look at it from all angles, which is what our hearing did today. We had experts talk about the science, economic development, ethics and advocacy of stem cell research, so that all sides were heard. The committee learned a great amount today."

Frankel is planning to introduce a proposal that would tax cigars and smokeless tobacco comparable to what cigarettes are taxed now in order to generate \$35 million-\$65 million a year in a bond issue from which a portion of it would be earmarked for investments in stem cell research.

"The Pittsburgh area has an array of companies and educational institutions that engage in stem cell research, so I know firsthand how important the research's impact is on the region. Southeastern Pennsylvania can have a similar effect," Frankel said.

"Pennsylvania and the Pittsburgh region in particular have a built-in advantage for stem cell research. Other states are moving aggressively to provide financial incentives to acquire researchers and resources that we already have," Frankel said. "As a result, I will continue to be active on this issue and work hard to bring significant investment to stem cell research in Pennsylvania."