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Contact: Campaign 727-320-4502

Email: Media@SammSimpsonForCongress.com

Congressional Challenger Supports Embryonic Stem Cell Research

Oct. 25, 2006 - Independent Democratic congressional challenger for District 10 Ms. Samm Simpson joined the fracas over embryonic stem cells calling for federal support for this potentially life-saving research and expressing profound disappointment with conservative radio commentator Rush Limbaugh's remarks concerning actor Michael J. Fox.

On Monday, Limbaugh said Fox, who suffers from Parkinson's disease, was faking its effects in a series of political ads supporting candidates who favor stem cell research. But Elaine Richman, a neuroscientist in Baltimore who co-wrote "Parkinson's Disease and the Family," said, "Anyone who knows the disease well would regard his movement as classic severe Parkinson's disease. Any other interpretation is misinformed." Limbaugh later apologized.

" It took tremendous courage for Michael J. Fox to make that commercial. I would hope one day that Mr. Limbaugh will learn to treat all human beings with a modicum of respect." Simpson added, " I believe researchers should be allowed to utilize stem cells of embryos slated for destruction - as long as permission is granted by the donors. When the vote came to override President Bush's veto on this breakthrough research, my opponent Congressman Young voted with the President.

Researchers believe stem cells have the potential to treat cancer, spinal cord injuries and muscle damage as well as Parkinson's and a number of other diseases through their ability to repair specific tissues or to grow organs. The vast majority of independent scientists and doctors agree that embryonic, as well as adult stem cell, research is needed and requires the deep pockets of the federal government to accomplish its full potential."

Embryonic stem cell research is a political hot potato as many religious conservatives argue that the research destroys the cell, which in their minds contain human life and could be a slippery slope to human cloning. Their arguments echo the position of President Bush who has limited federal funding for research on embryonic stem cells and issued his only veto in July against legislation to expand it.

Simpson called that veto and Young's support for the president's position a "substantial setback for millions who might eventually benefit from that research." She added, "Depriving people of the hope of potential cures is another example of the feigned "culture of life" that our President espouses. "

Dunedin resident and independent Democrat, Ms. Samm Simpson qualified in May 2006 with over 4,000 voter signed petitions as a candidate for Congress in Florida's 10th Congressional District. Voters now have a clear choice between candidates in November as Simpson's run for public office is fueled by a deep concern about the expansion of Presidential powers and Constitutional rule of law, the expanding federal deficit, the need to transform our energy policy and change our course in Iraq.

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