

Cures Were Being Held Hostage



Pro-family Americans experienced a tremendous victory with passage of the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act, which makes proven cord-blood adult stem cells available to save more lives. (You can read more about this on page 10.) CWA's legislative staff worked at full throttle to pass this important bill earlier in the current Congress, and I have the privilege of telling you the behind-the-scenes drama that surrounded it.

The cord-blood bill had already passed in the U.S. House and awaited action in the Senate. Then it became apparent that one senator, Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), had placed a hold on it for purely political reasons: to use the bill as leverage to pass H.R. 810, which promotes using (and killing) embryos for research—even though embryonic stem cells haven't treated *any* diseases.

That morning, Lanier Swann, CWA's Director of Government Relations, sent e-mail messages to our members in the states, and asked them to forward the messages to others. She asked them to contact Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nevada) to request a vote. Lanier also asked CWA of Iowa members and State Director Tamara Scott to contact Sen. Harkin, their senator, specifically to request that he lift his hold. Other pro-life groups in Iowa also contacted him.

"He was playing politics with people's lives," Tamara says.

That very evening, the Senate held a special session and passed the cord-blood bill unanimously! Yes, even Sen. Harkin voted for it. When Lanier e-mailed Tamara, she could hardly believe the good news.

"I don't recall a time when Sen. Harkin has ever backed down," Tamara says. "Some people don't even want to call because they believe it's futile. I tell them that we're responsible for our actions—and not someone else's reaction or inaction. . . . To see it come full circle was so special."



Tamara Scott

I want to share this with you because it shows so clearly how our members in the states and our national office work together hand in glove. In Washington, Lanier and the legislative staff were on the ground, where they learned about Sen. Harkin's hold-up. Then people in Iowa called him. He evidently heard from enough of them that he changed his mind. Senators know who reflects them, and they are bound to follow their constituents' wishes.

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