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SCHAKOWSKY: H.R. 534 THREATENS TO TAKE AWAY THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCOVER CURES FOR COUNTLESS DISEASES

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today addressed her colleagues on the House floor during debate on H.R. 534, legislation that would limit medical research. The legislation, however, was approved by a vote of 241-155. Below is Schakowsky's statement:

"Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 534 and in support of the Greenwood, Deutsch Substitute. H.R. 534 threatens to take away the opportunity to discover cures for countless diseases and squashes the hopes of patients and their families who wake up everyday hoping cures to the ailments from which they suffer have been found."

"I received a letter last week from a constituent in Chicago, Therese, who urged me to support ongoing somatic cell nuclear transfer research. She told me about her 13 year old son, Andrew, with type I diabetes who has to check his blood sugar level and inject himself with insulin repeatedly throughout the day and night. She wrote, "Even with the most vigilant care, he is bound to suffer traumatic complications from this horrible disease. No child should have to deal with a condition like this."

"Fortunately, doctors are learning more everyday about how to treat and eventually cure diseases such as diabetes, Parkinson's, and Alzheimer's using somatic cell nuclear transfer. Yet H.R. 534 aims to take away these research opportunities and, in the end, takes away all hope for Therese and Andrew!

"I, like most Americans, oppose human cloning. The truth is that supporters of this bill have an agenda that goes beyond banning human cloning. Their agenda includes taking away a woman's reproductive freedom. Many who oppose somatic cell nuclear transfer wish to ascribe to an egg with a nuclear transplant in a Petri dish the moral status of a person. Supporters of H.R. 534 are willing to forgo the possibility of medical advances because they think it is immoral and unethical to create such cells in order to conduct beneficial and life-saving research.

"I agree with the substitute offered by the gentlemen from Pennsylvania (Mr. Greenwood) and Florida (Mr. Deutsch) who recognize that we should ban research that is intended to reproduce cloned human beings. This substitute strikes the proper balance between regulating research and making sure that we don't close doors that could result in saved lives. However, H.R. 534 slams those doors shut!

"We are on the threshold of saving and improving the quality millions of lives. I urge you to support the advancement of medical research by voting NO on H.R. 534 and YES on the Greenwood amendment."