



**Position on Embryonic Stem Cell Research
Joni and Friends Christian Institute on Disability
Agoura Hills, Calif., March 10, 2009**

“We at Joni and Friends value a culture of life and believe that all life is to be valued and treated with respect. This includes the life of the embryo, which is just as much a living human as a full-term infant, a child, teenager, adult or senior citizen.

“Because President Bush shared these values, he placed a ban on federal funding for embryonic stem cell research. Scientists therefore spent the last eight years focusing on adult stem cell research, and the result has been a quiet, but stunning, revolution in the industry. Although embryonic stem cells were once touted for their unique ability to morph into other cells, scientists can now induce adult stem cells to produce the same results. That means that, in principle, they could cure diseases in which cells are damaged, like Parkinson’s or Alzheimer’s, or be used to treat spinal-cord injuries.

“Joni and Friends serves thousands of people with disabilities and their families. We believe it’s unconscionable to tell these families to wait unnecessarily when – if more funding were available – even more cures would be available. These adult stem cells – especially induced pluripotent stem cells – show more promise for cures than embryonic stem cells, and researchers are continuing to discover safer ways to inject them. Embryonic stem cell injections have led to the death of laboratory animals due to the formation of tumors, genetic instability and tissue rejection. And stem cells in the embryo can only be used by destroying it.

“For these reasons, we believe that embryonic stem cell research is not only flawed morally; it is flawed scientifically. It is a waste of time and money to conduct research on embryonic stem cells, and we cannot support President Obama’s position in this matter.”

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