



## ***The Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act of 2005***

Tuesday, December 20, 2005 - Joni Eareckson Tada

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I want to applaud President Bush for recently signing the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act of 2005. This new legislation will result in tremendous advancements in medical treatments using stem cells derived from a safe and ethical source: umbilical cord blood. While politicians have been haranguing over stem cells from human embryos, cord blood research has quietly made steady and solid advancements. Cord blood transplants have already saved the lives of hundreds of children with select debilitating diseases. More successful treatments may well be on the horizon as this legislation will establish a national databank of umbilical cord blood and bone marrow which will allow doctors to quickly find a match for patients who require stem cell therapies. This is good news for families who are looking to science for cures and treatments for their family members with various disabling conditions. There is no longer reason to waste precious research dollars on stem cell cures which kill human embryos; in fact, the prestigious journal Science noted on June 17, 2005, "It is nearly certain that the [human] clinical benefits of [embryonic stem cell] research are years or decades away. This is a message that desperate families and patients will not want to hear." However, we celebrate with these families affected by disability who now can be encouraged that stem cell research truly is making advancements on their behalf. All of us at Joni and Friends wish to thank the courageous efforts of the members of Congress who championed the passage of this bill. We are heartened that precious time and research dollars will now be channeled into a viable, safe, effective and most importantly, a truly ethical area of stem cell research. Joni Eareckson Tada  
CEO/Founder Joni and Friends International Disability Center.

