

**Testimony Presented to the Commerce Committee of the Connecticut General
Assembly**

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**Governor's Bill/HB 5042—
An Act Concerning the Regenerative Medicine Research Fund**

Good morning Senator LeBeau, Representative Perone, Senator Crisco, Representative Becker, Senator Franz, Representative Lavielle; members of the Commerce Committee.

I'm Paul Pescatello, a Board member of Connecticut United for Research Excellence—CURE.

CURE represents the Connecticut life sciences. We are a diverse network of small and large life and health care sciences companies, universities, scientists, educators, students, entrepreneurs, mentors, business experts and investors.

Together CURE and its members work to cultivate entrepreneurship, build bioscience companies and collaborate to ensure a sustainable, high-value bioscience community that improves our quality of life and keeps the Connecticut economy strong.

I am here today representing CURE, but I also want to note that I am a member of the Stem Cell Research Advisory Committee and a Connecticut Innovations Board member.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of the Governor's and House Bill 5042—An Act Concerning the Regenerative Medicine Research Fund.

I would like to begin by underscoring how successful the Connecticut Stem Cell Research Fund is.

When Connecticut's stem cell research program and funding was enacted by you, it was a bold and courageous act.

During a time when such research generated great controversy—some legitimate, much manufactured—you created a safe haven for stem cell research. The legislation was an embrace of science and rational analysis, and a rejection of fear.

It put Connecticut on the map, drawing cutting-edge stem cell research projects and leading stem cell scientists to Connecticut. It has been a powerful recruitment tool.

Our stem cell research program has produced rich dividends both in terms of the science it has generated and in economic development.

As the University of Connecticut, Yale and Wesleyan can attest, Connecticut funding has helped enormously in generating additional federal and private sector funding. The creation of stem cell labs and facilities, and the hiring of stem cell scientists and the many who support them, has had a significant effect across the Connecticut economy.

The value of the Connecticut stem cell research program can be seen perhaps most clearly in the research findings produced here and the reference and citation—the use—of these findings by scientists around the world. Simply put, the great strides made in this young discipline would be much weaker were it not for the contributions of Connecticut researchers.

The broadening of the stem cell research program to encompass regenerative medicine reflects in part the success of the program and how the science has evolved. It will also permit a larger community of scientists in related fields to avail themselves of research funding. The legislation will complement well the multi-faceted “bioscience Connecticut” initiative the Governor has so carefully conceived and executed.

Our expectation is that this legislation will not undercut the momentum we have achieved in what is the foundation of regenerative medicine, namely stem cell research.

We hope too that the legislation will not be interpreted as a tilting away from basic research. For very understandable reasons there is always great pressure to leap-frog from basic research, from understanding the building blocks and basic mechanisms of disease, to treatments and cures for patients.

If only that were possible. But there is no substitute for the hard and often unglamorous work of basic research. Basic research is the fastest route to the clinic, to patient treatments and cures. Underfunded basic research—or diverting funds to more clinically-oriented projects that are not supported on a solid foundation of basic research—puts translational research further into the future.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak before you today.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have or expand on any points I've made.