

Stem cell funding stirs Wisconsin fight: Catholic leaders express concerns to governor

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The battle over stem cell research has surfaced in Wisconsin, and both parties are members of the Catholic Church.

Democratic governor Jim Doyle announced in late April that the state would invest \$5 million to recruit companies in the stem cell industry to the state. Doyle's goal was for Wisconsin to have at least 10 percent of the market by 2015—in a race joined by states from California to Massachusetts.

In response, Archbishop Timothy Dolan of Milwaukee and Bishop Robert Morlino of Madison wrote to Doyle expressing concerns with his plan for Wisconsin to invest in and eventually profit from embryonic stem cell research.

“Generally, support for research that involves destroying human embryos is justified by the potential it holds to treat and cure illness, an understandable but morally flawed justification,” the May 22 document reads. “However, to justify such research on economic grounds takes the conversation in a disconcerting direction—a direction that further diminishes human embryos to mere commodities.”

The letter recommended nonembryonic adult stem cell research, arguing that it “shows greater promise for treatment and cures.”

Two days later, Doyle, a Catholic, replied to Dolan and Morlino, indicating that he will stay the course. “The ultimate question isn't whether embryos will be destroyed, but whether we should allow a few of those unused embryos to be utilized saving lives instead of discarding them,” he said. *-Religion News Service*