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While the NIH drafts the guidelines necessary to implement Obama's Executive Order, Congress will work on writing and passing legislation to codify the President's Executive Order. Future presidents would be able to overturn Obama's Executive Order but congressional action will make it harder to eliminate this new stem cell research policy.

As he closed his remarks before a jubilant crowd, President Obama recalled Christopher Reeve's long fight to regain his ability to walk and offered words of hope. The President said, "There is no finish line in the work of science. The race is always with us—the urgent work of giving substance to hope and answering those many bedside prayers, of seeking a day when words like 'terminal' and 'incurable' are finally retired from our vocabulary. Today, using every resource at our disposal, with renewed determination to lead the world in the discoveries of this new century, we rededicate ourselves to this work."

ASCB members attending the Obama ceremony included Nobel laureates Peter Agre, ASCB past president Mike Bishop, ASCB Public Policy Committee member Bob Horvitz, and Harold Varmus, who stood behind the President

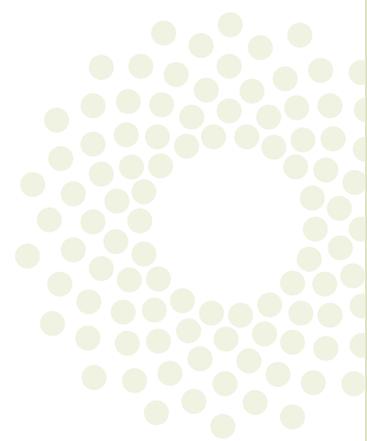
as he signed the Executive Order. ASCB past president Bruce Alberts, ASCB Public Policy Committee member George Daley, John Gearhart, Eric Lander, and ASCB Public Policy Director Kevin M. Wilson also attended the ceremony.

The ASCB has been very active in efforts to educate members of Congress about the importance of all forms of stem cell research and was one of the founding members of the Coalition for the Advancement of Medical Research (CAMR) in 2001. CAMR is now the U.S.'s leading stem cell advocacy coalition, with over 100 recognized scientific societies, patient organizations, and university members. Since CAMR's inception, the ASCB has been a member of CAMR's Board of Directors. Wilson serves as CAMR's Vice President of Science.

To read President Obama's Executive Order, go to www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Removing-Barriers-to-Responsible-Scientific-Research-Involving-Human-Stem-Cells.

To read the President's remarks, go to www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-of-the-President-As-Prepared-for-Delivery-Signing-of-Stem-Cell-Executive-Order-and-Scientific-Integrity-Presidential-Memorandum. ■

—Kevin M. Wilson



Obama Protects Role of Science in Decision Making

For U.S. President Obama, lifting President Bush's restrictions on federal funding for human embryonic stem cells was not enough for one day. He also issued a Presidential Memorandum directing the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) to develop a plan for returning scientific integrity to the federal government decision-making process.

In his remarks at the ceremony lifting the Bush stem cell policy, Obama said he was issuing the memorandum "to ensure that in this new Administration, we base our public policies on the soundest science; that we appoint scientific advisors based on their credentials and experience, not their politics or ideology; and that we are open and honest with the American people about the science behind our decisions."

This order by the President was in response to actions by the Bush administration ignoring or altering scientific results by several agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. During the Bush administration, some scientists considered for positions in the administration were questioned about who they voted for as well as their positions on politically sensitive but unconnected issues.

To read the Presidential Memorandum on Scientific Integrity, go to www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Memorandum-for-the-Heads-of-Executive-Departments-and-Agencies-3-9-09. ■

—Kevin M. Wilson