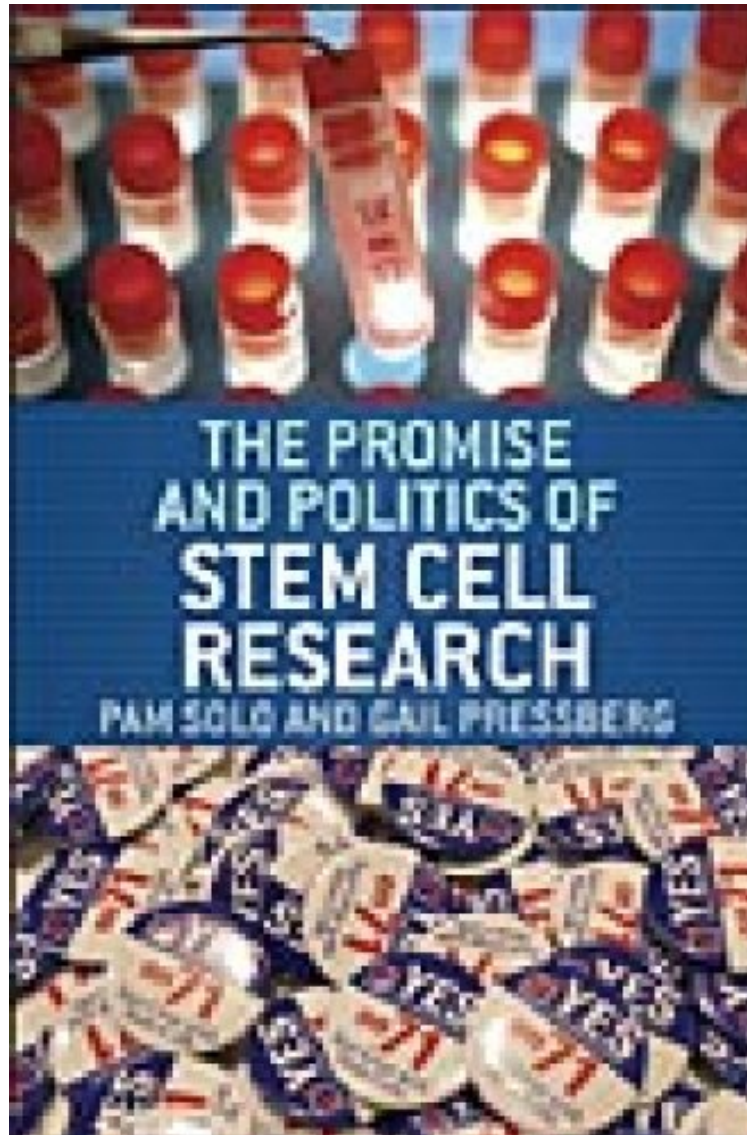


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## The Promise and Politics of Stem Cell Research

*Pam Solo, Gail Pressberg*

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**Pam Solo, Gail Pressberg : The Promise and Politics of Stem Cell Research** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Promise and Politics of Stem Cell Research:

2 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Right Message, Wrong MessengersBy Kain JunotWikipedia is a better source on both the promise and politics of stem cell research than this poorly written book. The main text weighs in at a paltry 140 pages and is heavily padded with unduly long lists such a whopping two page list (see pages 20-21) just to describe a now defunct and contextually unimportant working group. Besides having never been

introduced to a footnote, Solo and Pressburg constantly defer to celebrity opinion (more lists) and never to any peer-reviewed literature to substantiate arguments.

Ever since President George W. Bush limited federal funding for stem cell research, the topic has been top of mind for many, including the organized patient population representing every major disease now afflicting approximately 100 million Americans. In May 2005, the president vowed to veto a compromise that 50 Republicans and 188 Democrats in the House of Representatives supported. The compromise, if matched by a Senate measure, would have repealed the 2001 limits on funding. Action at the federal level remains stalled, but states have stepped into the void to do what they can to support stem cell research. Only six states have reinforced the federal ban, and 60 percent of Democrats, 60 percent of independents, and 36 percent of Republicans support lessening or eliminating the federal restrictions on funding. As long as such restrictions remain in place, the issue promises to be one of the most divisive in any campaign season. How did scientific and medical research on something smaller than a period at the end of a sentence come to such prominence in American political life? Embryonic stem cells are a cluster of about 150 cells that form after the joining of an egg and a sperm. The stem cells at the center of the cluster have the potential to become specialized cells that could one day benefit millions of Americans. Few areas of public policy have such far-reaching implications. This fact alone accounts for the remarkable level of information and sophistication by the broad general public. Confounding the traditional polarized politics of the country previously dominated by anti-abortion and pro-choice politics, the politics of stem cell research may be redrawing the contours of public life. New political partnerships have been formed across party and ideological lines. Unusual and remarkable collaborations between scientists and patients have created a deeply informed constituency as advocates for the research. Rarely has a so-called cultural or value issue broken through the reflexive ideologies of left and right, conservative and liberal, as has the politics of stem cell research.

"Whatever constitutes one's point of view about embryonic stem cells, everyone agrees they are at the center of strong and emotional debate. Solo and Pressberg, president and stem cell advocacy specialist respectively at the Civil Society Institute, note how political reactions to the means and intentions of this research has recreated politics aside from traditional ideological and party lines and created some hitherto unlikely partners. They also describe the new ways in which researchers, patients, and those who feel they may be potential patients are advocating for government funding." - SciTech Book News "There is a growing and grassroots demand for action at the federal level on stem cell research. This is a core lesson of the 2006 mid-term election: People want this research to go forward and politicians will be rewarded for taking a clear and unambiguous stand on the issue. This reflects the fact that stem cell research is not a 'right' or 'left' issue--it is something that mainstream America wants to see happen." - PR Newswire "Stem Cell Research: Promise and Politics makes it clear that the promise of stem cell treatment lies not in the halls of politics, but in the hearts of people. No government can stand in the way of hope." (Patti Davis, author of *The Long Goodbye*, a book about her father's struggle with Alzheimer's disease and the care that her mother, Nancy Reagan, provided during the various stages of this horrific disease.) "From its inception the debate about support for stem cell research has been a mixture of science and politics. Solo and Pressberg make an eloquent case that the discussion should not be left either to scientists or politicians alone but rather should include a vocal and informed public--after all, the public has the largest stake in the outcome of this debate. They have defined a new role for public opinion--active, intelligent, and outspoken--and significantly raise the bar and define the potential role for public advocacy in future debates about other complex issues." (Robert Goldstein, MD, PhD, MBA, Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International) About the Author Pam Solo is President and Founder of the Civil Society Institute, an action-oriented think tank that works for social change. CSI focuses on science policy and climate change through innovative strategies and partnerships. She is the author of *From Protest to Policy: Beyond the Freeze to Common Security* (1988) and was awarded a MacArthur Prize Fellowship for her work in 1989. Gail Pressberg is a Senior Fellow at the Civil Society Institute, where she develops the Institute's stem cell advocacy program. With the American Association for the Advancement of Science, CSI initiated the first study and working group on the ethical policy options for stem cell research.