



STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**STEVE KESTELL**  
27TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Dear Colleagues-

I want to make it clear that by urging people to read the interview given to MSNBC by Dr. James Thomson, it was not my intent to imply in any way that Dr. Thomson supported AB 499. I purposely did not excerpt only those parts of the interview that I agreed with in an effort to misuse his comments, but rather encouraged that the entire interview be read to help gain understanding of a complex issue.

Since there have been various explanations given about what cloning is or is not, I believe that Dr. Thomson's candid and honest depiction of the issue should not be overlooked. I still believe that everyone involved in the debate would benefit by reading the entire interview. While we can disagree on policy, we should agree to honor the truth.

-Representative Steve Kestell

[I have included a copy of my response to Dr. Thomson below:](#)

Dear Dr. James Thomson,

I am sorry if you thought that I have misinterpreted your words in any way - that was not my intent. I did however, forward a copy of the MSNBC interview to my legislative colleagues but made no attempt to interpret your words. If there is anything contained in my memo that is inaccurate please let me know so that I can make a correction. The exact script of the memo sent to legislative offices is as follows:

Dear Members of the Legislature,

I have attached a link to an interview that Dr. Thomson gave to MSNBC this week. It is fascinating reading and clearly shows that Dr. Thomson is an honorable man who has given great thought to the ethical questions surrounding his work.

I encourage everyone to read the entire article and pay extra attention to his remarks about Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer (cloning). Dr. Thomson understands the implications and also expresses a concern that has been recently denied by representatives of our own University, that once a cloned embryo is created for research purposes, it is virtually indistinguishable from any other embryo and could be implanted.

Dr. Thomson goes on to talk about the overdone hype used by proponents (and opponents) of research and encourages honest discussion rather than deception.

In this interview, Dr. Thomson talks about separating the debate over cloning and other forms of stem cell research - This is exactly what AB 499 allows us to do.

Rep. Steve Kestell

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/8303756/>

As you can see, my intent was for people to simply read the interview. I thought your comments were straight forward and did not require interpretation; unfortunately, this is an element too often lacking in this particular discussion. Your discussion of SCNT was candid and consistent with previous public comments made by you on the subject. I thought it was refreshing to read an accurate description of the issues surrounding the debate.

As you know, we are engaged in a legitimate public policy debate and it is important to use accurate information when that information is available. I concur with your suggestion to separate the issue of somatic cell nuclear transfer for public policy purposes and that is exactly what I have been suggesting for some time.

As you are disappointed, I am too. I am disappointed that our own University has attempted to squash debate and confuse the facts with faulty and misleading testimony and heavy handed lobbying. I am disappointed that the research community has apparently decided that the public has no role to play in an important policy decision.

Dr. Thomson, I am not ashamed of Wisconsin or the basic values that have made this State great and I do not believe that abandoning those values to erase an imaginary T-shirt is a good bargain.

Representative Steve Kestell  
*27th Assembly District*