



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

Senate Democratic Leader Malcolm A. Smith Appoints Brooke Ellison To Stem Cell Board

[MALCOLM A. SMITH](#) August 26, 2007

Noting her lifetime of advocacy and achievement, State Senate Democratic Leader Malcolm A. Smith (D-St.-Albans) today announced his nomination of stem cell research advocate Brooke Ellison to serve on the Empire State Stem Cell Board formed to oversee New York State's sponsorship of cutting-edge biomedical research.

Ellison, who became paralyzed from the neck down after being struck by a car in 1990, is a nationally known proponent of stem cell research as well as an author and motivational speaker.

"I can think of no one better qualified than Brooke Ellison to serve on the Empire State Stem Cell Board," Smith said. "Stem cell research, and its potential for treating serious medical conditions, has been the core of Ms. Ellison's recent life work as a motivational speaker, author, public policy advocate and political candidate."

Ellison said: "It is such an honor to be appointed by Senator Smith to serve on the Empire State Stem Cell Board, and to join my fellow board members in advancing a cause I so strongly believe in. Through the Stem Cell Board, and under the guidance of Governor Spitzer and Lieutenant Governor Paterson, New York is helping to forge a necessary path

towards scientific and medical breakthroughs that can change the way we understand some of the most enigmatic conditions. Just as importantly, though, the work provided under this Board is the manifestation of hope for millions of New Yorkers, and I am proud to be a part of it."

Lieutenant Governor David A. Paterson said: "Brooke Ellison is not only a dear friend, but an inspiring and articulate voice for the promise stem cell research holds in giving scientists a better understanding of how the human body functions. I look forward to the great work Brooke will accomplish on the Stem Cell Board, and I thank Senator Smith for nominating such an exceptional candidate to help guide the future of advanced biomedical research in New York."

A graduate of Harvard University and its Kennedy School of Government, Ms. Ellison holds a Master's degree in public policy. Her book, "The Brooke Ellison Story," chronicles Ms. Ellison's life from the time of her 1990 accident to her work as an undergraduate at Harvard where she majored in psychology and biology, graduating in 2000. The book later inspired a film about her life directed by Christopher Reeve.

In 2006, she campaigned for a seat on the State Senate, focusing on health care, education and housing issues in her bid to represent Long Island's 2nd Senate District.

The Empire State Stem Cell Board was proposed by Governor Eliot Spitzer and Lt. Governor David Paterson in the 2007-08 Executive Budget. \$600 million has been allotted for disbursement by the Board over the next 10 years in support of stem cell research.

The board is comprised of two committees with a total of 26 members. A Funding Committee will review grant proposals, recommend scientific and medical oversight standards and

solicit Requests for Proposals (RFPs). The Ethics Committee -- to which Ellison has been nominated -- is designed to make recommendations to the Finance Committee on the scientific, medical and ethical issues surrounding various stem cell projects seeking funding.

Stem cell research may lead to landmark treatments for many serious diseases, including heart disease and diabetes. Under the right conditions, unspecialized stem cells can develop specific functions, with the possible medical benefit of serving as replacement cells or tissue.
