

# ROMAN REED & ADVOCACY

- 2** The Roman Reed Story
- 3** Interview with Roman Reed on Gov Grown's Veto of AB714 Spinal Cord Injury Research Bill
- 5** LIGHT A CANDLE OR CURSE THE DARKNESS? Roman Reed Builds a Senatorial Campaign Around Biomedicine



# THE ROMAN REED STORY

It was the first game of the college football season, and Roman Reed was playing exceptionally well. Then fate intervened. The tackle only took a few seconds, a vertebra was crushed, and his dream of playing in the NFL ended.



"I tried to give a thumbs-up to the crowd, but my hand didn't work. I went from being able to bench press 430 pounds to not being able to lift my arms or move my legs."

The doctor's prognosis was bleak, and Roman was told that he would never walk again, never use his arms, and never father a child. His response? "Never tell me never!" Today, Roman can bench press 225 pounds and is the proud father of three!

Spearheaded by our great 20th District Assemblyperson John Dutra, Roman and his father Don have worked tirelessly to have the Roman Reed Spinal Cord Injury Research Act passed in California. As a result, more than \$12.5 million in state funds has been awarded to scientists conducting research in spinal cord regeneration. An additional \$50 million has been leveraged from outside sources.



Roman joined the SPSC to promote research and awareness on behalf of all those with spinal cord injury and dysfunction. President Obama invited him to the March 9, 2009, ceremony commemorating the historic reversal of the government's ban on the use of federal funding for embryonic stem cell research. Roman is not only back in the game, he is also calling plays.

<http://www.romanreedfoundation.com/roman-reed.html>

# INTERVIEW WITH ROMAN REED ON GUV BROWN'S VETO OF AB714 SPINAL CORD INJURY RESEARCH BILL

Posted on October 7, 2013

Unfortunately California Gov Jerry Brown vetoed AB714, the Roman Reed Act that would have greatly supported spinal cord research. Roman Reed is of course a top stem cell patient advocate and driving force in research.

Roman received my Stem Cell Person of the Year Award last year (See picture at right). The contest for the 2013 Award is ongoing now. You can vote for your favorite candidate to be a finalist.

Below is my interview with Roman on Brown's veto.

## 1. Please briefly summarize for us the goals of AB 714 and how it would be funded. How is it similar and different from last year's bill?

Reed: The goals of AB714 are simple: to provide \$1 million in general funds for the funding of the best science in California to move forward towards achieving our goal of paralysis cure.

We put the money into a general UC system account located at the UC Reeve-Irvine Center. Then scientists make grant proposals, we grade each proposal and only fund the highest scored best science. As Dr. Hans Keirstead says "Let the science lead".

Roman's law has been in place since 1999 signed by both governors Gray Davis and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. What we have accomplished has been monumental. Roman's Law provided the funding for America's first human clinical trials for embryonic stem cell research. We employed over 600 Californians. And, brought over \$100 million into the field of paralysis research. Granting \$15 million directly and attracting an additional \$85 million in matching grants from out-of-state sources, new money for California. We created jobs, economic return and moved the entire field of paralysis research forward.

## 2. AB 714 had near universal legislative support, correct?

Reed: Roman's Law AB714 passed the California State Senate unanimously with full bipartisan support! Every Democrat and Republican in the entire Senate saw how important AB714 was to help cure the paralyzed. After passing the Assembly overwhelmingly by a 63-4 vote. Leaders from both sides of the political aisle saw clearly how important and vital it is to fund research for paralysis cure.

We spend more money every year taking care of our chronically injured in our country than we receive in



total combined taxes both personal and corporate annually. This is not sustainable for our country, we must find cures.

### **3. What is your reaction to Brown's decision to veto the bill and his explanation of his reasoning in the veto message?**

Reed: I am disgusted and determined. Disgusted that anyone, let alone a Governor, would veto the hopes of curing the paralyzed. And, determined to do whatever it takes to correct this wrong.

### **4. Given that Brown has now vetoed this bill two year's in a row, where do we go from here?**

Reed: "I like things to happen, and if they don't happen I like to make them happen." – Winston Churchill  
Thus, I'm going to win state office and help make the medical Laws from within the Capitol. I will need and appreciate all of your support everyone.

We will be launching [www.electromanreed.com](http://www.electromanreed.com) this week.

Curing the paralyzed and finding medical cures is the most important task of our lives for the health of our loved ones and the economy. Some fights we just have to win and together we can. Millions of People are depending on our success. All for Cure & Cure for All!

Together, we shall make cures happen. I am Roman Reed and you have my word on it.

<http://www.ipscell.com/2013/10/interview-with-roman-reed-on-guv-grows-veto-of-ab714-spinal-cord-injury-research-bill/>

# LIGHT A CANDLE OR CURSE THE DARKNESS? ROMAN REED BUILDS A SENATORIAL CAMPAIGN AROUND BIOMEDICINE

*Sun Mar 23, 2014 at 06:02 AM PDT*

When you vote for a Senator, you are not just selecting a member of a party, or supporting a set of political beliefs; you are choosing someone whose entire life has prepared them for this day.



LIGHT A CANDLE OR CURSE THE DARKNESS? Roman Reed Builds Senate Campaign Around Biomedical Research

By Don C. Reed

When you vote for a Senator, you are not just selecting a member of a party, or supporting a set of political beliefs; you are choosing someone whose entire life has prepared them for this day.

Nineteen years ago, Roman Reed became paralyzed in a college football game. His neck was broken; the spinal cord was injured. The doctors gave him no hope of ever returning to a normal life-style.

But they did not know my son. Above his hospital bed, Roman had a sign made: "I CAN, I WILL, I SHALL", and that has been his motto ever since.

After months of grueling rehabilitation exercise, he recovered the use of his arms, and learned to drive an adapted van. Roman Reed had places to go and things to do, like graduating from the University of California at Berkeley—and passing a law to fight paralysis.

Inspired by Roman, Assemblyman John Dutra (D-Fremont, retired) authored a medical research bill, the Roman Reed Spinal Cord Injury Research Act of 1999. Over the next ten years, "Roman's Law" provided \$15 million in California dollars for research— while attracting an additional \$87 million from the National Institutes of Health and other sources—over one hundred million dollars in biomedical research for California.

It was a small miracle when a formerly paralyzed lab rat took her first tentative steps—walking again after paralysis-- but there was more to come.

Our small law funded research by Dr. Hans Keirstead, which led to the world's first embryonic stem cell clinical trials for people. Thomas Okarma of Geron said, "Without the Roman Reed Act, it would never have happened."

But every success led to a larger awareness. Roman realized that "incurable" illness and injury was far



bigger than paralysis alone. An estimated 5.6 million Americans are paralyzed—but perhaps one hundred million citizens suffer chronic disease or disability.

When Palo Alto's Bob Klein inspired Proposition 71, the California Stem Cells for Research and Cures Initiative, Roman had to be a part of it.

His persuasive powers went to to work. Always a good salesman, he would drive his power chair up to strangers on the street, smiling at them-- while demanding their signatures of support for California's stem cell program.

It is pretty hard to say no to my son! When he was a boy, he would help his sister Desiree' sell Girl Scout cookies. People would buy from him, and then give the cookies back, the box unopened—so Roman could sell them again.

Roman was featured in an advertisement for Prop 71, directed by legendary Jerry Zucker, famous for such films as GHOST and AIRPLANE.

And when the California stem cell program needed a few words to sum up its mission, it was Roman's suggestion: "Turning Stem Cells Into Cures", which became the official motto.

Battling for cure sums up Roman's approach to life: that to solve a problem is better than to complain about it.

He understands the nuts-and-bolts aspects of everyday politics as well, serving as Commissioner of Health and Recreation for Fremont. The grueling hours and late night meetings are part of the price: to get things done.

Using his experience with the politics of research, he helped develop spinal cord injury and stem cell research programs in Alabama, home of TJ Atchison, first person in the world to receive embryonic stem cells as a therapy. The treatment administered to Atchison was the same one developed by Hans Keirstead, on a grant from "Roman's Law". The Alabama Institute of Medicine (AIM) was also begun and developed with his enthusiastic leadership and continual support.

But it is when things go wrong, that you find out who a person really is.

When the funding ran out for the law named after him, Roman made the four hour commute to Sacramento, meeting with the legislative aides of every member of the Assembly and Senate, again and again. The program was renewed unanimously in 2005, and signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger.

But in 2010, although the program was unanimous approved for renewal, there was no money for it.

Give up? Not in his vocabulary.

In three separate efforts--2011, 2012, and 2013-- Roman tried to renew funding for the program. But the bill was defeated—first in a close Appropriations Committee vote, and then, astonishingly, vetoed by Governor Brown, twice! --even after its unanimous passage by the California Senate.

That was when Roman decided he needed to fight from the inside. Like the middle-linebacker he had been in football, who would go through a line of blockers to bring down a runner, he wanted to take on the challenges, personally.

That's why Roman Reed is on the ballot now, running for California State Senator, District 10.

Roman's Mexican-American mother, Gloria Aceves Reed, raised Roman to believe in himself, and never give up.

As a member of America's disability community, he knows what it is to face limitations, and to overcome them.

Roman's life, and his response to it, has prepared him for this challenge.

There is a saying attributed to John F. Kennedy : "It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness."

Roman Reed's goal is to turn on the lights for everyone.

---

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2014/03/23/1286756/-LIGHT-A-CANDLE-OR-CURSE-THE-DARKNESS-Roman-Reed-Builds-a-Senatorial-Campaign-Around-Biomedicine#>