

Legislative Issue

Letter from the President -

Another Successful Rally for Life

If you were one of the over one thousand folks who attended the March 7 Rally and Lobby Day, you saw first hand the tremendous motivation and commitment of the pro-life community.

The focus of the day was to show support for the Joint Resolutions in the House and in the Senate which would place on the next statewide ballot a constitutional amendment to close the loopholes of Amendment 2 which supposedly banned human cloning.

The “No MO Cloning” rally energized the crowd with remarks from Archbishop Raymond Burke of St. Louis. Dr. David Prentice, Senior Fellow for Life Sciences with the Family Research Council and recognized expert on the issue, spoke at



David Prentice, Family Research Council,
Pam Fichter, President
Rick Scarborough, Vision America

the rally and presented workshops throughout the day. Sen. Matt Bartle and Rep. Jim Lembke, sponsors of the Resolution in their respective houses, urged all attending to contact their legislators and the leadership for support. Rep. Belinda Harris, Chairman of the House Democrats for Life, reminded the crowd that this is a bi-partisan issue.

Dr. Rick Scarborough of Vision America closed the rally with a stem-winder speech and closing prayer.



Pam Fichter

A very special thank you to the choir from Helias High School in Jefferson City who provided the inspirational music for the event.

Looking over the sea of red worn by those attending, I was struck by the many families who brought their children to the rally. This is a great sign of our commitment to the pro-life movement. Thanks to all of the groups, in addition to Missouri Right to Life, who helped organize the Rally. A very special thank you to all who took off work, took their kids out of school, or gave a day of their lives to come to their state Capitol and make a difference for *LIFE!*



Photo courtesy Jay Nies - *The Catholic Missourian*

House Votes to Fund Destruction of Human Lives

On March 29, 2007, a majority of the members of the Missouri House of Representatives voted to fund life destroying research in House Budget Bill 7. While many legislators tried to claim that the funds were for other research, due to language in the Missouri Constitution from the passage of Amendment 2, these funds cannot be prevented from going for unethical experimentation on human embryos. This same leadership, in recent years, zeroed out funding for family planning because the money could not be prevented from going to subsidize abortions. “Missouri Right to Life is profoundly disappointed in the Missouri House of Representatives. The state

House Joint Resolution 11, Senate Joint Resolution 20

RESOLUTIONS ATTEMPT TO CLOSE LOOPHOLES, BAN ALL HUMAN CLONING

Senator Matt Bartle (R-8) and Rep. Jim Lembke (R-85) have proposed a Joint Resolution in their respective houses, Senate Joint Resolution 20 (SJR 20) and House Joint Resolution 11 (HJR 11) to place on the next statewide ballot a proposed constitutional amendment to ban all human cloning and return to our legislators the right to provide oversight and regulation of the biotech industry. The language of the SJR and the HJR are printed below.

A McLaughlin poll of likely voters taken prior to last November's election showed that over 80% of Missourians oppose human cloning. Because of outrageously deceptive ballot language, many who voted for Amendment 2 thought they were voting to do just that. However, the language of the amendment actually created a right to clone through the process of "somatic cell nuclear transfer" which is the universally-accepted scientific definition of human cloning. The proposed Joint Resolution would give voters a fair opportunity to close the loopholes to a total ban of human cloning that now exist in our constitution.

The resolution process is one of two ways to get a proposed constitutional amendment on the ballot. The other method to do so is through an Initiative Petition.

The Joint Resolution process has several advantages. Through this process, the legislature writes the ballot language; whereas, in the Initiative Petition, the Secretary of State is in control of the ballot language.

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It takes a simple majority in both houses to amove this resolution to the next statewide ballot, which would be November 2008. The governor is not required to sign the Resolution. The Initiative Petition, however, would require a tremendous grassroots organization

and resources to gather the necessary signatures.

On Tuesday, March 27, the House Health Care Policy Committee, chaired by Rep. Wayne Cooper (R-155), successfully voted to pass HJR 11 out of committee. It will now advance to the House Rules Committee for consideration. It must be voted out of this committee to move to the floor for a vote of all House members. The status on pieces of legislation changes daily. Please check the Missouri Right to Life website, www.missourilife.org, for updates and action needed on this legislation.



Text of Joint Senate Resolution 20

Submitted to the qualified voters of Missouri, an amendment to article III of the Constitution of Missouri relating to human cloning.

Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring therein:

That at the next general election to be held in the state of Missouri, on Tuesday next following the first Monday in November, 2008, or at a special election to be called by the governor for that purpose, there is hereby submitted to the qualified voters of this state, for adoption or rejection, the following amendment to article III of the Constitution of the state of Missouri:

Section A. Article III, Constitution of Missouri, is amended by adding thereto one new section, to be known as section 38(e), to read as follows:

Section 38(e). 1. The general assembly may enact laws concerning health care research, including controlling taxation, appropriations, and use of public resources for health care research, and regulating research that could pose a risk to human life or health.

2. It is unlawful to engage in human cloning. For the purposes of this section and section 38(d) of this article, "human cloning" means the creation of a human embryo at any stage from the zygote onward by any means other than the fertilization of a human egg by a human sperm.

3. The provisions of this section supersede any provision of section 38(d) of this article that is inconsistent with this section.

Text of Joint House Resolution 11

Submitting to the qualified voters of Missouri, an amendment to article III of the Constitution of Missouri relating to human cloning.

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring therein:

That at the next general election to be held in the state of Missouri, on Tuesday next following the first Monday in November, 2008, or at a special election to be called by the governor for that purpose, there is hereby submitted to the qualified voters of this state, for adoption or rejection, the following amendment to article III of the Constitution of the state of Missouri:

Section A. Article III, Constitution of Missouri, is amended by adding thereto one new section, to be known as section 38(e), to read as follows:

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2. It is unlawful to engage in human cloning. For the purposes of this section and section 38(d) of this article, "human cloning" means the creation of a human zygote, human blastocyst, or human embryo by any means other than the fertilization of a human egg by a human sperm.

3. The provisions of this section supersede any provision of section 38(d) of this article that is inconsistent with this section.

Missouri Right to Life Lists Problems With Sale of MOHELA Assets

On March 12, 2007, Pam Fichter, President of Missouri Right to Life, and Jim Cole, General Counsel, communicated in a letter to the members of the Missouri General Assembly MRL's objections to the proposed sale of the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority (MOHELA) assets.

Last week, some news media reported that a "new direction" will be introduced for the MOHELA deal. The change made in the "new direction", as reported, appears to consist in what projects are listed to receive MOHELA money, with the headlines claiming that no cloning or embryonic stem cell projects will be funded.

The full text of the proposed "new deal" has not been made public. Missouri Right to Life will not change its opposition to the MOHELA deal without examining closely the text of any Senate Substitute for SB 389 or any other legislation. However, assuming that the media reports are accurate, Missouri Right to Life does not find the "new direction" for the MOHELA deal acceptable.

First, \$15 million from the MOHELA sale will go to the Missouri Technology Corporation, an entity that is controlled or heavily influenced by officials of the Stowers Institute, the main sponsor of Amendment 2. Missouri Right to Life joins in the comments that the Missouri Catholic Conference has made on that issue. By itself, it renders SB 389 and any other legislation dealing with the MOHELA deal unacceptable.

Second, the "new direction" reportedly proposed for SB 389 or other legislation appears to reduce funding for "stem cell research" to zero, and public statements by legislators indicate the change is made specifically for that purpose. Such a reduction by the Senate or the House, for that purpose, after the introduction of a bill that would have allowed such funding, appears to violate Amendment 2's language on funding, as follows:

No state or local governmental body or official shall eliminate, reduce, deny, or withhold any public funds provided or eligible to be provided to a person that (i) lawfully conducts stem cell research . . . but (ii) receives or is eligible to receive such public funds for purposes other than such stem cell-related activities on account of, or otherwise for the purpose of creating disincentives for any person to engage in or otherwise associate with, or preventing, restricting, obstructing, or discouraging, such stem cell-related activities. (Art. III, Section 38(d), subsec. 5, Mo. Const.)

Pursuant to this language, therefore, an institution such as the University of Missouri, which already conducts experiments using human embryonic stem cells, could sue the state for restoration of the MOHELA funding that is "eliminate[d]," "reduce[d]," and "den[ied]" by any action of the legislature, and the chances of the University's winning such a lawsuit would be good. Other institutions might be able to file and win such lawsuits as well. The substitute, or any action by the legislature to eliminate, reduce, or deny any funding, in other words, is worthless. Missouri Right to Life does not see how SB 389 or other restrictive legislation can be written to deny the funding in light of the language of Amendment 2 quoted above. Only if the breathtaking reach of Amendment 2 as to state money is curtailed by another constitutional amendment can this situation be rectified.

Third, apart from Amendment 2, the cooperation agreement creating the Lewis and Clark Discovery Initiative apparently remains in place. It is the understanding of Missouri Right to Life

that this contract allows unilateral changes by any of the parties thereto concerning what projects are funded. Whether or not it does, all the parties are free to change a contract at any time. All the parties to the cooperation agreement have incentives to restore the projects that any legislation purports to cut out. SB 389, or any other legislation can do nothing to impede changes in the cooperating agreement by the parties. It appears, therefore, that the list of projects funded by MOHELA money may be changed as soon as the ink is dry on the Governor's signature on SB 389 or any other legislation. Of what use, then, is the "new direction" of the MOHELA deal? To pro-life citizens, none.

It is these and other concerns that led the Board of Directors of Missouri Right to Life, on March 10, 2007, to reaffirm the opposition of Missouri Right to Life to SB 389 and any other legislation dealing with the sale of the MOHELA assets, including the "new direction" of MOHELA, as described in the media. For more information, see MRL's webpage.



Pro-Life, Anti-Life Bills Presented in 2007 Missouri Legislative Session

In addition to the MOHELA sale and the joint resolutions to ban cloning, several other bills are making their way through the Legislature.

The state alternatives to abortion program would be made permanent in one bill; another would compel all abortion clinics, whether a majority of their business is abortion or not, to comply with the Missouri health regulations that govern abortion clinics; a third would operate to ban abortionists from giving talks at public and at charter schools in sex education programs. All three of these bills have been combined into a single substitute bill, SCS SB 370, 375, 432. Conscience clause protection would be granted to pharmacists in SB 385 and to pharmacies as businesses in HB 412. Women would be counseled about fetal pain before abortions are done in SB 196.

Missouri Right to Life has offered testimony in support of all of these bills in committee hearings.

The anti-life side is not just sitting around. Anti-conscience legislation that would force pharmacists to fill prescriptions no matter what their consciences dictate has been introduced as SB 72. A bill that would have the state encourage the use of the so-called "morning after" pill, which often functions to cause abortions by interfering with the ability of a week-old human being to implant into the mother's womb, was offered as SCR 11. Missouri Right to Life testified against both of these proposals in legislative hearings.

Finally, legislators are sponsoring resolutions that, when approved by the people, would raise the bar to amending the state constitution by increasing the percentage of approval that is required to 60% or more, or by tripling the number of petition signatures that must be submitted to the Secretary of State, and the like. Such proposals are grossly unfair after Amendment 2 squeaked through with just over 51% of the vote. As long as we are trying to plug the gaping loopholes of Amendment 2, we cannot sit idly by while the rules are changed to keep the pro-life side from doing what the cloners barely accomplished. MRL is actively opposing such obvious attempts to rig the game against pro-life citizens.

Six Stem Cell Facts

by Robert P. George and Rev. Thomas V. Berg, L.C.

Americans are divided over the question of whether it is morally acceptable to authorize by law, and fund with taxpayer dollars, research in which human embryos are destroyed.

Stating that such research “crosses a moral boundary that our decent society needs to respect,” President Bush vetoed legislation last summer that would have expanded federal funding of human embryonic stem cell (ESC) research. This January, in a first step toward reviving that vetoed legislation, the House of Representatives voted 253-174 to pass a similar bill. The Senate is expected to consider the measure this week.

Candid observers should admit that public discussion of this emotional issue has too often lacked intellectual honesty. This has only compounded the confusion naturally arising from an issue of great scientific and moral complexity. Consequently, we propose six facts on which people on either side of the moral debate should be able to agree:

-- There is no “ban” on human embryonic stem cell research in the United States.

This has been arguably the most muddled point in the entire debate. ESC research goes on at labs throughout the country, with no legal barriers to prohibit such research or the private financing of it. The federal government has funded ESC research to the tune of \$130 million since 2001, and the U.S. continues to be the international leader in the field. Out of all peer-reviewed research papers published from 1998 through 2005 on original human ESC research, scientists from the U.S. published by far the most, 125 of the 315.

-- We are a long way away from therapies derived from embryonic stem cells.

James Thomson, the first scientist to derive stem cells from a human embryo, made this point clearly just a few weeks ago: “I don’t want to sound too pessimistic because this is all doable, but it’s going to be very hard.” He added, “those transplantation therapies should work but it’s likely to take a long time.” Leading British stem cell expert Lord Winston has been even more blunt: “I am not entirely convinced that embryonic stem cells will, in my lifetime, and possibly anybody’s lifetime, for that matter, be holding quite the promise that we desperately hope they will.”

There are currently no controlled human clinical trials underway for ESC-derived therapies. By contrast, there are currently some 1200 clinical trials underway associated with human adult stem cells (ASCs). While most treatments derived so far from ASC research apply to blood-related diseases, the broader application of ASCs for a more diverse array of maladies is likely within several more years.

-- The human embryo has at least some degree of special moral status.

“We believe most would agree that human embryos deserve respect as a form of human life” So said President Clinton’s Bioethics Advisory Committee, speaking of ESC research. The committee was willing to support the use of “excess” embryos from assisted reproduction clinics, but only if their use was necessary to advance lifesaving research. It did not endorse the creation of embryos by cloning or other methods for use in research involving their destruction.

Standard embryology texts insist that from the zygote (single-cell embryo) stage forward there exists a new living member of the species homo sapiens. Surely we can all agree that the human embryo possesses the active potential to develop by an internally directed process towards maturity, and that this is morally significant.

-- There are non-controversial alternatives worth exploring.

It is increasingly clear that there are non-embryo destructive research alternatives that hold out the promise of providing sources of stem cells with properties equivalent to, or nearly equivalent to, embryonic cells. Such alternatives include, among others, the reprogramming of ordinary somatic (body) cells, the derivation of stem cells from amniotic fluid, and (assuming that it can be shown that the product is not an embryo) altered nuclear transfer.

-- Concerns about embryo destruction are not only religious.

Charles Krauthammer, a former member of the President’s Council on Bioethics, lucidly articulated this point in a Washington Post column: “I don’t believe that life -- meaning the attributes and protections of personhood -- begins at conception. Yet many secularly inclined people such as myself have great trepidation about the inherent dangers of wanton and unrestricted manipulation -- to the point of dismemberment -- of human embryos. You don’t need religion to tremble at the thought of unrestricted embryo research. You simply have to have a healthy respect for the human capacity for doing evil in pursuit of the good.”

-- While the search for cures is an important motive behind ESC research, it is clearly not the only motive.

Most scientists acknowledge that ESCs will not provide therapies for many years, if ever. Their therapeutic potential is, at best, speculative. They cannot be used now, even in clinical trials, because of their tendency to produce tumors. So it comes as no surprise that many scientists now admit that their primary interest in pursuing ESC research lies not in the hope for direct cell transplant therapies, but in the desire to enhance basic scientific knowledge of such things as cell signaling, tissue growth and early human development.

We believe that embryo-destructive research cannot be morally justified, even if it really were likely to produce cures for dreaded afflictions. We fervently share the desire for cures, but we believe that biomedical science compromises its own integrity when it destroys human life in the cause of trying to save it.

We acknowledge, though, that many of our fellow citizens are people of good will who see things differently. They do not believe that a human life in its earliest stages enjoys the moral inviolability that it would acquire if permitted to develop to later stages. The disagreement here is deep and serious, but it should not be permitted to obscure the important points of agreement that should exist between citizens on the competing sides.

Mr. George is a professor of jurisprudence at Princeton University and a member of the President’s Council on Bioethics. Rev. Berg is executive director of the Westchester Institute for Ethics and the Human Person. This commentary first appeared in The Wall Street Journal, March 14, 2007.

How To Respond If Your Legislator Says . . .

James S. Cole, General Counsel
Missouri Right to Life

1. “Amendment 2 banned human cloning already.”

There was a loophole in the definitions of Amendment 2. It didn’t ban cloning but only implanting a clone. The people of Missouri Want this loophole closed. A poll taken by the respected firm McLaughlin & Associates shortly after the election discovered that 38% of the people who voted “yes” would have voted “no” if they had known that Amendment 2 allowed cloning.

2. “The people have spoken; you are just trying to override the will of the people.”

The people thought they were banning cloning, but there was a loophole that they didn’t know about: Amendment 2 only banned implantation, not cloning itself. The people want to close the loophole and ban cloning for real.

3. “You need to take this back to the people in an initiative petition.”

We elect legislators to represent us and pass needed measures. We are asking you to do your job and put this on the ballot without making us waste time and money to obtain hundreds of thousands of signatures on petitions. We don’t have the resources of the cloners, and we want to conserve the sacrificial contributions made by ordinary folks to use for the media advertising that will be needed during the campaign. Besides, if the Legislature puts the measure on the ballot, the ballot language is not in the control of the pro-abortion, pro-cloning Secretary of State.

4. “Somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT) does not create a human being: scientific claims.”

NOTE: (1) Scientists have not yet successfully cloned a human being. However, SCNT is the process that has been used to clone sheep, cats, dogs, horses, and other animals. It is the process that will most likely be used for human cloning. The statements provided here are worded as if cloning a human has already been done, because it could happen in the near future and there is no scientific reason to believe that SCNT will behave any differently in human beings than it does in other mammals. The President’s Council on Bioethics, Human Cloning and Human Dignity: An Ethical Inquiry, Ch. 1, July 2002. (2) Anyone who wants to explore the scientific issues further would enjoy reading an article by Patrick Lee and Robert P. George, “The First Fourteen Days of Human Life,” The New Atlantis (Summer 2006) pp 61-67, which comprehensively addresses the arguments of the cloners, by name.

a. “There is no human being without fertilization.”

This is like denying that Dolly the cloned sheep was a sheep. SCNT results in an organism that in all stages, from first to last, is the same as an organism that results from fertilization of an egg by a sperm. The first stage, a zygote clone, is indistinguishable from a normal zygote; the blastocyst stage is indistinguishable from a normal blastocyst; and so on. Fertilization is the normal way to produce a human, but “twinning” is a form of cloning that occurs

in nature, when one zygote splits in the first few days of life to form two individuals. SCNT is a form of artificial cloning that scientists have manufactured. All these processes in humans will result in humans.

b. “There is no human being if a sperm in not involved.”

This is another way of saying “a” above. Twinning does not require sperm, either, but both of the twins that result from twinning are just a human as the original zygote was.

c. “The cloned human does not have all the genetic switches in the chromosomes turned “on”, or there is some other biological technicality that is said to be different from what normal zygotes, blastocysts, or embryos have.”

Whatever the exact technicality that may be raised here, it is quibbling that does not amount to more than saying, “the new human is not normal.” A baby produced the normal way that has certain genetic switches turned “on” or “off” the wrong way is not “unhuman” because of that; he or she may be handicapped to a greater or lesser degree, but he or she remains human. The same is true for cloned human beings.

d. It is not a human being until at least implantation. Before then, it is a pre-embryo.”

This is the same argument that abortionists use to justify the “morning after” pill. They try to define pregnancy as beginning at implantation, and they try to define human life as beginning only at implantation, too. The National Institute of Health stated in its Report of the Human Embryo Research Panel in 1994 that “the pre-implantation human embryo warrants serious moral consideration as a developing form of human life.” In 2002, the National Academy of Sciences acknowledged in Scientific and Medical Aspects of Human Reproductive Cloning that “in medical terms,” the embryo is a “developing human from fertilization” onwards. Dr. John Wyatt, a British professor of neonatal pediatrics, said: “The redefinition of human embryos as mere biological material or ‘totipotent stem cells’ in order to allay public concerns smacks of semantic trickery rather than responsible debate.”

e. “It is not a human being until at least implantation, because only in a womb does a blastocyst become a self-directed organism.”

This is not true. Before implantation, the young embryo goes through processes called “compaction” (the cells rearranging themselves more tightly together), “cavitation” (the creation of an empty cavity inside the embryo, and the differentiation of cells as the embryo assumes a ball-like shape), and “hatching” (coming out of the membrane originally on the outside of the egg), all of which are processes that are performed as a unity, not helter-skelter by unorganized cells. (See the Lee & George article referred to above.) Before implantation there is without doubt organized activity that demonstrates the working of a unified whole, an organism, not just random activities of an unorganized blob of cells.

Thought you'd like to know . . .



. . . . A company that processes and stores umbilical cord blood for future medical use says it's experiencing significant growth in the amount of cord blood it has on hand. That after Congress and state legislatures approved bills to promote awareness of using this embryonic stem cell research alternative. (Cord blood is an excellent source of adult stem

cells.) Cryobanks International's mission is to become the largest provider of cord blood stem cells for transplant and research purposes in the world and it's well on its way to fulfilling that goal. With over 15,000 cord blood units processed and 9,000 listed on international registries for transplant, Cryobanks continues its push to help close the gap between patient needs and available resources. In recent years, cord blood transplants have become widely recognized as a safe, effective, and in many ways preferable, alternative to bone marrow transplant. According to Cryobanks' CEO, over 35,000 American children and adults with life-threatening illnesses find themselves in need of a transplant each year. More than 150,000 people worldwide could be helped by cord blood transplants.

LifeNews.com March 20, 2007

. . . . The Fox show *Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader* is a ratings hit, and it's got Bryan Kemper, director of Stand True Ministries, thinking about America's understanding of abortion.

"The premise of the show is that most adults can't answer simple questions that fifth-graders can answer," Kemper wrote at standtrue.com. "If you can answer 11 first to fifth grade test questions, you win a million dollars. It's hilarious to see college graduates not able to do simple math or answer English questions. Now I know how real this is because I see it every day—adults not knowing simple truths that are obvious to children. I can take a set of fetal models or pictures of babies in the womb to any first or fifth grade class room in this country. I can ask the kids to identify what is in the picture, and they will tell me that it is a baby. I see it all summer as parents bring their kids to the booth and, when they see the fetal models, they say, 'Baby, baby,' as they try to reach down to pick one up. Now you take these same models and pictures to a group of adults and you will get the most ridiculous answers to the same question: 'a blob of tissue,' 'just a fetus' ... 'a parasite.'

"When it comes to something so simple as looking at a baby and knowing that it is a baby, we as a nation are obviously not smarter than a fifth grader."

Hannibal Chapter Annual Yard Sale

Missouri Right to Life - Hannibal Chapter will hold its annual yard sale on Friday, May 25, from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday, May 26, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. (50% off on Saturday!) at the Mabee Sports Complex of Hannibal LaGrange College. The Sports Complex is located at the corner of Hwy 61 and Route 168 in Hannibal.

Donated household items may be dropped off Monday, May 21, through Wednesday, May 23, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Sports Complex. Prior approval is needed for furniture donations

On Thursday, May 24 a "sneak preview" for the yard sale will be held from 4 - 8 p.m. A \$1 entrance fee will be charged for these special Thursday hours.

For additional information, call Geri Graves at 573-221-3410 or email her at hgraves@warprdriveonline.com.

No Money For Planned Parenthood

Missouri Right to Life applauds Governor Matt Blunt for pulling state taxpayer funding of a Planned Parenthood program through the Show Me Healthy Women Program. We agree with the Governor that taxpayer money should not go to the state's largest provider of abortion. Additionally, Missouri women should not have to rely on abortion providers for routine healthcare.

In Memory & Honor

In memory of a loved one or to commemorate a special occasion, these gifts were made to Missouri Right to Life.

In Memory of:

Margaret Phillips

Terry Boyle

Lucille M. Jockenhoefer

Given by:

*David & Virginia Burkemper
Richard & Linda Tochtrop*

MRL Sedalia Chapter

*Phyllis & John Rippel
Dan, Caroline & Cheiko Bush
Paige & Aaron Bartoni
The Benz Family
Erika Sajben*

In Memory of:

David Kempf

Robert Pioantek

Craig Schnieders

In Honor of:

Bill Prinster

Given by:

Rose & Alan Mengwasser

MRL East Central Area

Robert & Irma Linsenbardt

Given by:

*Dorothy Hoerber
Ruth Rothermich
Henry Prinster
Ann Ludlow
Rita Block
Marilyn Stuart*



Missouri Right to Life encourages you to consider a commemoration for a family member or friend. Your gift will support pro-life work to restore respect for the sanctify of life.

Egg Harvesting and Embryonic Stem-cell Research Pose Serious Threat to Women's Health

By Peter J. Smith

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 13, 2007 (LifeSiteNews.com) – A congressional hearing on March 8, 2007, raised awareness on the risks to women's health and fertility by in vitro fertilization (IVF), human cloning, and embryonic stem-cell research, where experts testified the techniques and drugs involved posed unacceptable risks to women.

Reps. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.) and Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio) co-sponsored the congressional briefing "Trading on the Female Body" March 8, International Women's Day, where health experts, and a mother who lost her daughter from health complications from IVF, testified on the severe dangers to women's lives posed by fertility and human cloning technologies.

"Current practices follow a historical pattern of exposing women to risks that prove ultimately unacceptable," said Diane Beeson, PhD., chairwoman of the group "Hands Off Our Ovaries", at a Capitol Hill press conference.

"The harvesting of multiple eggs often involves the administration of drugs that have not been approved for this purpose," she continued. "Also these drugs have not been adequately studied for their long-term effects on women despite research providing some evidence of significant harm to women in both the short term and long term."

A recent study by scientists at the University of Padua found 1 in 10 women undergoing fertility treatment will suffer milder forms of an adverse reaction to the drugs called ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome (OHSS), while 1 percent will be at risk for life-threatening blood disorders. Researchers also analyzed doctors' reports since the early 1990s and discovered 60 percent of fertility treatment accidents involved blood clots in the head and neck.

The UK Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists also wrote in their 2006 guidelines on hyperstimulation that noticeable reactions occur in 33% of IVF cycles, with an estimated 3-8% of patients showing moderate to severe reactions. Severe can mean blood clots, renal and liver

dysfunction and acute respiratory distress leading to serious morbidity, while two international women – one in Dublin and another in London – are believed to have died from severe OHSS.

Angela Hickey told the hearing that she lost her daughter Jacqueline Rushton, 32, who underwent the IVF treatment and experienced severe OHSS, which put her body into Adult Respiratory Distress, causing her death.

Dr. Beeson noted that currently no registries exist to track the health of women who undergo IVF treatment, despite the real possibility of long term risks of ovarian, uterine, vaginal and breast cancer associated with the drugs used to boost egg production.

"Egg harvesting is taking place in a research climate marked by conflicts of interest, the misleading use of language to describe research goals, and a commercial push that may lead to the exploitation of young women," she argued.

The Arizona Republic reports that fertility clinics or egg collection businesses may offer anywhere from \$5,000 to \$50,000 dollars for women to donate their eggs, and often solicit coeds for the procedure, who are often in debt and unaware of the risks to their fertility.

Josephine Quintavalle – founder Comment on Reproductive Ethics (CORE), pointed out that many of these women may believe the myth that they have "millions of eggs to spare." However, only an estimated 500 oocytes of the 14 million formed in utero are available at the beginning of a woman's menstrual life.

"This concern is timely in light of renewed efforts in Congress to fund destructive embryonic stem cell research in the name of pursuing cures," said Deirdre McQuade, the pro-life spokeswoman for the US Bishops, who explained that damage caused by embryonic stem-cell research goes far beyond the embryos destroyed by "a great many women as egg factories, at great risk to their health and safety."

House Votes to Fund Destruction... *continued from page 1*

should not be funding the destruction of human lives by anyone, whether by abortionists or by those who call themselves scientists," said Pam Fichter, President of Missouri Right to Life.

After attempting and failing to take out \$15 million dollars appropriated for this research and after an amendment that attempts to restrict the funding was deemed useless when held up to Amendment 2, now in our Missouri Constitution, Missouri Right to Life took a position in opposition to House Budget Bill 7. Please refer to our website, www.missourilife.org to find out how your legislator voted and to find out what appropriate action should be taken.



**Got Questions
about pro-life issues?**

**Wondering
about pro-life legislation?**

**Want to take a more active role
in your pro-life calling?**

Then check the
Missouri Right to Life
website at
www.missourilife.org

NRLC 2007



**Bringing Life to the
Heart of America**

**Bringing the Heart
of America to LIFE!**

35th Annual National Right to Life Convention
June 14-16, 2007 ~ Kansas City

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Kansas City, Missouri 64108

\$119 flat room rate for 1- 4 people per room

816-421-1234

Or, you can log onto <http://crowncenter.hyatt.com/groupbooking/mkcrknrli2007>
to make your room reservations online.

For convention information, call 202-378-8842 or go to Special Events at nrlc.org

-- Featured Speakers --

Wesley J. Smith

Senior Fellow Discovery Institute, Attorney for the International Institute on Euthanasia and Assisted
Suicide, and Special Consultant for the Center for Bioethics & Culture

Father Richard John Neuhaus

President, The Institute on Religion and Public Life

Phill Kline

Former Attorney General of the State of Kansas

Happy & Blessed Easter



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