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*"I contend it is an embryo."  
"I don't think anyone is saying that it is just an egg."*

**- Dr. Gearhart, speaking at Congressman Greenwood's press conference today and clarifying that the product of Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer (SCNT) is scientifically an embryo.**

Dear Colleague:

At a press conference today organized by supporters of the Greenwood substitute to the Weldon/Stupak human cloning ban, Dr. Gearhart clarified for reporters that the product of SCNT is clearly an embryo. This is consistent with Dr. Gearhart's previous statements on the matter and is an important clarification since one Member of Congress at the same press conference contended that the distinction in this debate is that it is "not an embryo, it is an egg."

Dr. John Gearhart of Johns Hopkins University, one of the discoverers of human embryonic stem cells, also testified before President's Council on Bioethics on April 25, 2002 saying:

"I know that you are grappling with this [question of whether a cloned embryo created in the lab is the same thing as an embryo produced by egg and sperm, and whether we should call it an embryo], but anything that you construct at this point in time that has the properties of those structures to me is an embryo, and we should not be changing vocabulary at this point in time."

In order for us to have an honest debate on the issue of human cloning, it is important that we acknowledge what is scientifically obvious - that an egg is a single cell, with only 23 chromosomes, but that once genetic material is introduced and the embryo is developing we have a member of the species Homo sapiens, possessing 46 chromosomes, and as likely to be a male as a female. Of course cloning creates an embryo, because if it did not why would proponents of the Greenwood substitute want to ban the implantation of the clone?

If proponents of human cloning for research want to create cloned human embryo farms in order to do batteries of tests on the embryos and destroy them, then they should just be honest about it like Dr. Gearhart was today.

Sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH  
Member of Congress