



(202) 626-8820, www.nrlc.org/killing_embryos/index.html

February 21, 2003

**RE: Greenwood embryo-farms substitute amendment
vs. Weldon-Stupak Human Cloning Prohibition Act**

Dear Member of Congress:

On Thursday, February 27, the House of Representatives will choose between the Human Cloning Prohibition Act (H.R. 534), authored by Congressmen Weldon and Stupak, and a radically different -- indeed, antithetical -- substitute amendment to be offered by Congressman Greenwood.

The National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) supports H.R. 534. Because enactment of the Greenwood policy would be a giant step in the pro-cloning direction -- it would give the green light to what President Bush called human "embryo farms" -- NRLC strongly urges you to vote "no" on the Greenwood Substitute. The roll call on the Greenwood Substitute will be included as a key vote in the NRLC congressional scorecard for 2003.

The Weldon-Stupak bill (H.R. 534), which NRLC supports, would ban any use of cloning to create human embryos. In contrast, the Greenwood Substitute would permit (indeed, would encourage) the creation of any number of human embryos by cloning for the purpose of harvesting their parts. The substitute even leaves open the door -- as artificial womb technology advances -- to growing cloned humans to later stages of fetal development for the harvesting of their tissues and organs, as has already been done with cloned cows and mice.

Supporters of the Greenwood Substitute assert that it would "ban reproductive cloning," but this claim is highly misleading, because the Greenwood Substitute does not restrict the actual act of human cloning -- the use of somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT) to create human embryos. Rather, the Greenwood Substitute would seek to impede the initiation of a pregnancy. Thus, the Greenwood Substitute bans not human cloning but the survival of human clones, which is a very different matter.

When Mr. Greenwood originally offered his pro-embryo-farming substitute during consideration of the Weldon-Stupak bill in 2001, Dr. Charles Krauthammer wrote a powerful column, "A Nightmare of a Bill," pointing out its radical implications: www.nrlc.org/Killing_Embryos/Krauthammer%20on%20Greenwood%20Amendment.pdf

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On July 31, 2001, the House rejected the Greenwood Substitute (roll call no. 302), before approving the Weldon-Stupak bill by a margin of 265-162 (roll call no. 304).

When language similar to the Greenwood Substitute was proposed in the Senate, the Bush Administration made it clear that any such clone-and-kill legislation would face a veto. (See the letter from HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson's to Senator Sam Brownback, here: http://www.nrlc.org/killing_embryos/ThompsonoBrownback.pdf)

Moreover, the Justice Department submitted testimony explaining that once countless human embryos are created by cloning, there would be no practical way to enforce the prohibition on transferring such embryos into wombs. The testimony is here: http://www.nrlc.org/killing_embryos/Justice_Dept_on_cloning.pdf.

We would add that in our view, there also would be no ethical way to enforce such a prohibition, which would amount to a federal law requiring the death of a class of members of the species *Homo sapiens*.

On January 22, President Bush said, "I also urge the Congress to ban all human cloning. We must not create life to destroy life. Human beings are not research material to be used in a cruel and reckless experiment." In his January 28 State of the Union address, the President again urged enactment of a real ban on human cloning. We urge you to support the President's call to act before what he has aptly called human "embryo farms" open for business in the United States.

Some supporters of the Greenwood Substitute claim that it would allow only "research on unfertilized eggs," and that cloning does not really create a human embryo. But this is nonsense. Authorities as diverse as President Clinton's bioethics panel, NIH, and researchers who are attempting to clone human embryos at Advanced Cell Technology, all agreed that somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT) with human genetic material will create human embryos -- until recently, when they decided to try to hide the embryo for political purposes. (Here are some quotes from various pro-cloning and neutral authorities: http://www.nrlc.org/killing_embryos/factsheetembryo.html)

The Weldon-Stupak bill does not place any restrictions on research on human "eggs," unfertilized or otherwise. As any middle school biology student knows and any dictionary will confirm, a human "egg" (ovum) is a gamete cell, possessing only 23 chromosomes. While an egg cell is produced by the female, the egg cell itself has no sex. But once one has a complete nucleus that is activated (whether through sexual fertilization or by asexual somatic cell nuclear transfer), then one has a developing embryo, not an "egg cell." There is no such thing as a five-day-old or two-week-old "egg" that is developing, has 46 chromosomes, and may as easily be male as female. That describes only a human embryo.

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As for the claim that the Greenwood Substitute would only permit research on “unfertilized” embryos, this is just another word trick aimed at the gullible. *Of course* human embryos produced by cloning will be “unfertilized,” because that is what cloning is -- asexual reproduction, reproduction without fertilization by sperm. Every cloned animal in the world was “unfertilized” from the one-celled embryo stage, and every one of them will be “unfertilized” on the day they die. And if a member of the species *Homo sapiens* is created by cloning, is implanted in a womb, is born, and lives to be 25 years old, she will still be “unfertilized.” But she will be human.

Some supporters of the Greenwood Substitute claim that the Weldon-Stupak bill would ban cloning research on human “cells” or even on human DNA. This is false. The Weldon-Stupak bill (at Section 2, (d)) *explicitly allows* the use of cloning techniques to produce cells, tissues, or organs, whenever this can be done without first creating a human embryo.

Moreover, the Weldon-Stupak bill does not speak to the separate issue of the use of frozen human embryos, created through in vitro fertilization, for medical research on stem cells or for any other research purposes. The restrictions of the Weldon-Stupak bill apply only to:
(1) the use of the somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT) cloning technique, to produce
(2) a human embryo.

Despite the efforts of some to confuse the cloning debate with the separate issue of stem cell research, even Mr. Greenwood conceded, during the 2001 debate, “The gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON) did not bring a bill to the floor to ban embryonic stem cell research.”

A more detailed critique of the misleading claims that some are making on behalf of the Greenwood Substitute and the similar Hatch-Feinstein bill (S. 303) is posted here:
http://www.nrlc.org/killing_embryos/cloningbackrounder021003.html

In conclusion, NRLC strongly urges that you oppose the Greenwood Substitute, and support without amendment the Weldon-Stupak Human Cloning Prohibition Act (H.R. 534). Thank you for your consideration of NRLC’s perspective on this critical issue.

Sincerely,



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