

“THERAPEUTIC” CLONING is potentially HARMFUL TO WOMEN — OPPOSE EHB 1268

You may lose women’s votes if you back EHB 1268

Cloning defined

Cloning, or “somatic cell nuclear transplantation (SCNT),” involves fusing a body (“somatic”) cell of one animal with an egg that has had its nucleus removed. The finished product is a one-celled cloned embryo that is a twin of the animal that donated the body cell. A cloned embryo has two possible fates: (1) implantation into a uterus with the purpose of a live birth—“reproductive” cloning; or (2) destruction to obtain its embryonic stem cells for research—“therapeutic” cloning. A true ban on human cloning prohibits formation of a cloned embryo, thus barring the paths into either fate. This bill does not ban cloning, but attempts to regulate what is done with an already cloned embryo.

The United Nations passed a ban on all human cloning (“reproductive” and “therapeutic”). The main reason cited by the UN for this complete cloning ban was that human cloning of any kind is an affront to human dignity because it destroys the lives of human embryos and would likely exploit women. **This bill conflicts with this ban.**

- **There are pro-life and pro-choice women coming together to oppose all forms of human cloning, both “reproductive” and “therapeutic.”**

Harm to women stems from the inefficiency of human cloning. In the only published human cloning experiment, 16 women donated a total of 242 eggs. Of the cloned embryos created with these, only 30 reached the blastocyst stage where embryonic stem cells can be obtained. Only one embryonic stem cell line was established. To date, no therapies or treatments exist that use such cells. (<http://www.cbhd.org/media/pr/2004-02-12.htm>)

- Extrapolating from this experiment, **“therapeutic” cloning would require 16 women to donate eggs per patient.** Women risk potential complications from the superovulation and egg donation process, including ovarian cysts, rupture, and cancers; pelvic pain; stroke; negative effects on future fertility; and even death.
- There are **not enough women of child-bearing age in the US to donate eggs if eligible patients were to receive this “therapy.”** **Even with a more generous estimate of cloned ESC production, the 60 million U.S. women of childbearing age could hypothetically “donate” eggs for only 6 million patients.**
- EHB 1268 estimates that 128 million Americans suffer from diseases. **Do the math**—this would create a shortfall --**human eggs may become a commodity, with exploitation of disadvantaged women around the world.**