

HUMAN EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH IS A DEAD END — OPPOSE EHB 1268

If human embryonic stem cell (HESC) research is to be widely used, it is doubtful that it would be limited to “leftover” embryos.

- **HESC research cannot be done on a large scale with the current number of available frozen embryos**
 - A 2002 RAND Corporation survey of in vitro fertilization (IVF) clinics in the United States (found at www.stemcellresearch.org) finds:
 - **The vast majority of the 400,000 currently frozen embryos — 88.2% — are being held for family building, NOT slated for destruction.**
 - 2.2% are slated to be discarded.
 - **2.8% (about 11,000) have been designated to be destroyed for research purposes.**
 - Only a small number of those 11,000 embryos would actually yield stem cells. Using what it calls “a conservative estimate” the RAND study calculated that **only about 275 stem cell lines could actually be developed from the embryos available for research.** And even then, the RAND study concedes that this number “is probably an overestimate. There is a significant mortality rate when unfreezing embryos, as well as inefficiency in producing stem cell lines.
- **Egg freezing technology is improving.** If it becomes a viable alternative, it may obviate creating excess human embryos at all in the future, thus eliminating the supply of embryos for research. There are centers now offering human egg freezing on an investigational basis, and a handful of children have been born, each of whom started life from a frozen egg. (See http://www.fertility-docs.com/news_events.phtml)
- Production of HESC lines is inefficient and there are not sufficient numbers of frozen human embryos. Therefore, **in order to have adequate numbers of HESC lines to theoretically make this research useful, biological “factories” would have to be developed that create human embryos for the sole purpose of performing destructive research on them. Ultimately, women would probably be exploited for eggs to make such research a reality.**

Is this why EHB 1268 does not prohibit creation of human embryos for the sole purpose of their destruction (a practice repudiated by proponents of HESC research)?

OPPOSE EHB 1268