

OPPOSE EHB 1268

Prepared by Sharon Quick, MD, FCP, FAAP
Washington State Coordinator, American Academy of Medical Ethics
Representing over 300 physicians in WA, and over 16,000 in the US

This bill authorizes research harmful to human embryos, women, patients, and physicians' practice of ethical medicine.

This bill is unnecessary and poorly written.

- There is no ban on human cloning or embryonic stem cell research in this state or at the federal level, and fertility clinics in WA currently offer patients the option of donating leftover embryos for research.
- This bill is classified as a cloning ban but it is not; it encourages human cloning and attempts to regulate what is done with the already cloned embryo.
- Poor language in the bill allows a number of nightmarish scenarios:
 - Allows fetal farming of human cloned individuals
 - Does not limit destructive human embryo research to "leftover" embryos from IVF
 - Would not prohibit manufacture of human embryos for the sole purpose of killing them for their stem cells
 - Provides no restrictions upon what is done with a human embryo donated to another individual (black market sale?)
 - Contains inadequate language to prohibit sale of human cells or tissue
 - Does not prohibit unethical types of animal-human hybrids

The United Nations passed a ban on all human cloning ("reproductive" and "therapeutic"). This bill conflicts with this ban. 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 promotes **"THERAPEUTIC" HUMAN CLONING AND HUMAN EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH** which are....

Harmful to embryos because this bill:

- **Legalizes discrimination based on developmental age—by creating a class of humans (cloned and noncloned embryos) for the sole purpose of destroying them for their stem cells.** This violates worldwide medical codes established to protect human research subjects.
- **Allows "fetal farming" of cloned embryos—implanting and growing cloned humans in a uterus up to 9 months gestation, as long as they are aborted prior to birth for use of cells and tissues**
- **Allows human eggs and sperm to be donated to manufacture human embryos for the sole purpose of destructive research (Section 7); such research is not limited to "leftover" human embryos.** Even proponents of embryonic stem cell research repudiate this practice.

Harmful to women

- "Therapeutic" cloning
 - Would require an estimated 50 to 100 human eggs per patient. There are **not enough women of child-bearing age in the US to donate eggs if eligible patients were to receive this "therapy"** which is estimated to cost \$200,000 per patient
 - Eggs would become a commodity, **exploiting women**
 - **Health risks** involved with egg harvesting
- Embryonic stem cell research
 - **Cannot be done on a large scale with the current number of available frozen embryos**
 - Egg freezing technology is improving so that excess human embryos may not be made in the future, thus eliminating the supply of embryos for research

- Would require biological “factories” creating human embryos for the sole purpose of their destruction—this practice is not prohibited by this bill
- Women could be exploited to provide eggs for these “factories”

Harmful to patients

- Cells or tissue from cloned embryonic stem cells (“therapeutic” cloning)
 - Are **diseased**; current health standards would not allow their use in patients
 - Can be rejected (explanation complex)
 - Have not been very successful in animal studies—it would be unsafe and unconscionable to proceed with human trials
 - Have not been used for one single human clinical study
- Embryonic stem cells...
 - Can form **tumors** in animal studies
 - May be **rejected**
 - Can have **genetic or other abnormalities** after being grown in a culture
 - Have had **few successes in animal studies**--it would be unsafe and unconscionable to proceed with human trials
 - Have not been used for one single human clinical study
- This bill **authorizes crossing the line that has protected human life as intrinsically valuable, and makes its value conditional.** An increasing number of humans can be excluded from full rights of personhood. This will **ultimately harm the very people this research purports to help—the diseased and disabled.**

Harm to physicians’ ability to practice ethical medicine:

- These bills require doctors treating fertility patients to offer options for disposition of embryos that include, among others, donating embryos for research and destroying them. There is no conscience clause for physicians who adhere to the tenets of the Hippocratic Oath and could not authorize such practices.

An alternative approach to accomplish the same clinical goals is **ADULT STEM CELL (ASC) RESEARCH** which....

- Is **safe**--Usually involves use of a patient’s own cells
- **Does not harm human embryos**
- Is **successful**--Has been used in **over 50 human clinical applications** for a wide range of disorders (heart failure, stroke, immune disorders, cancers, spinal cord injury, diabetes, Parkinson’s disease, many more.....)
 - Has also been successful in the lab, although more research is still necessary to develop repeatable methods of working with these cells
 - ASCs are found not only in bone marrow, but in other tissues like fat and heart
 - ASCs have been shown to turn into different tissue types in the lab
 - Bone marrow stem cells from human patients have been found to repair damaged tissue in organs outside the bone marrow. Whether they are actually turning into other cell types in vivo or simply inducing repair of native tissue may not be clear, but studies are showing success and some controlled trials have been done
- If limited resource dollars are put into human embryonic stem cell research and “therapeutic” cloning, money will be diverted from much more promising research like that being done with adult stem cells.

Websites to explore for further information:

www.stemcellresearch.org
www.cloninginformation.org