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The Secretary  
House of Representatives Standing Committee  
On Legal & Constitutional Affairs  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

December 29, 1999

Dear Mrs Surtees,

Thankyou for your acknowledgement of our submission to the Committee's inquiry into the scientific, ethical and regulatory aspects of human cloning. You have indicated that we may opt to have our submission authorised for publication in the official bound volumes and also that electronic submissions may be linked to the Committee's web page. We would like to authorise such publication and have appended the original submission so that it might be placed on the web site.

Yours sincerely,  
John D. and Elizabeth M. Nelson

November 2, 1999

**Re: Inquiry into Human Cloning**

We write to express our ongoing concern over the extension of the existing tolerance of embryo experimentation to the realm of cloning and stem cell cultivation. It concerns us that an arbitrary decision that embryos are not living human beings is the basis for allowing such experimentation and procedures to be performed.

The clinical reference to 'embryo' in the discussion is calculated to disassociate the growing cell from the human family in the thinking of the public. It is reminiscent of some military references to *collateral damage* in speaking of civilian casualties. Researchers may consider embryos not to be people but they have a vested interest in so defining them. We can see no justification to think of the human embryo as anything other than one of our human family, deserving of special protection and care.

The justification that the research will have therapeutical benefits is no argument. It is a fundamental moral principle that the strong have an obligation to protect the weak. There may be some sympathy with a Robin Hood robbing the rich to pay the poor, but here the reverse is being advocated. We are surely not degenerated to the level of those who trade in body parts from executed criminals. We are not opposed to research into developing specialised tissue from living cells which **does not** involve the destruction of human beings. But to sacrifice the life of an unborn child to improve the quality of life of another is totally repugnant to all sense of virtue and

honour. The potential benefits of research and the satisfying of scientific curiosity do have limits, unless we are to embrace the worst excesses of Nazi Germany's medical experimentation.

We respectfully remind the honourable members of the House of Representatives Standing Committee that they are accountable to God for the protection of the unborn. He is the Author of our beings and no philosophical sophistry can alter the guilt of those who take upon themselves the decision to bring an untimely and unjust end to one who is made in His image.

We applaud the action of the government in forbidding euthanasia in the Northern Territory and urge this committee to take the same stand to protect the innocent unborn.

Yours sincerely,

John D. Nelson Elizabeth M. Nelson