

2 October 2006

Elton Humphery  
Committee Secretary  
Community Affairs Committee  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT

Dear Mr Humphery

I am writing to express my concerns about proposals for human embryo experiments to come before Federal Parliament. These recommendations are from the Lockhart Committee which reviewed the *Prohibition of Human Cloning Act 2002* and the *Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002*. .

Recommendations to allow the creation of human embryos by cloning and other means for the purposes of destructive experimentation do not reflect ethical or community standards. Cloning creates a living human embryo; on that essential biological truth there must be no scientific and political deception. Further, cloning creates a human embryo solely for research with its destruction intended, and that is wrong. We should not create one life in order to destroy it for the benefit of another life.

A further concern is that the focus on stem cell research seems to have been mainly on embryo stem cells in spite of the fact that all the successes from treating human patients with stem cells have come from using adult stem cells. Embryonic stem cells remain too dangerous to use in humans. They are unstable, difficult to manipulate into particular cell lines and can develop into cancerous tumors.

What concerns me greatly is that the Lockhart's Committee's recommendations are generally directed towards a general and substantial weakening of the existing regulatory regime and the permitting of pretty much wholesale reproduction of human embryos for the sole purpose of research. The biotech industry's claims about the benefits of cloning and embryo experimentation have been misleading and exaggerated while its risks have been dishonestly minimised. These recommendations therefore represent a radical departure from the current regime and would usher in a new regime of ruthless exploitation of human life and ever diminishing restrictions on the scientists and commercial interests involved.

Typically in areas of medical research, experimentation proceeds first with animal species. It is inappropriate that embryo research be done on humans before animal species. Why should ethical defence of the most basic human right, widely recognised in international conventions, now be abandoned?

I urge that Committee recommend that the Commonwealth maintain a ban on the creation of human embryos, the cloning of embryos and the creation of animal-human hybrids purely for destructive use in experiments.

Yours sincerely

(R J Smallhorn)