

3 October 2006

Committee Secretary
Community Affairs Committee
Department of the Senate
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Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia
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Re: *Inquiry into the Legislative responses to Recommendations of the Lockhart Review*

Members of the Senate Community Affairs Committee,

The Lockhart Committee's recommendations presented in Part C of the Legislation Review Committee Reports are appalling and a cause for grief. The recommendations for the treatment of embryos, their redefinition, creation from more than two people and the mixing of elements of humans and animals in #24 cannot be endorsed in any era of history. To think that this kind of 'development', foreseen in some form by both H.G Wells in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World*, is now being urged is chilling.

Senator Kay Patterson's tabled *Prohibition of Human Cloning for Reproduction and the Regulation of Human Embryo Research Amendment Bill 2006* is astonishing in that she exercises no critical or discriminating judgment about the recommendations. Each recommendation is an object to be realised. No dissent to any position is provided. Perhaps, as Senator Stott-Despoja stated on 14 September this year, she is keen to "allow the potentially *dazzling* benefits of this technology to proceed." (My emphasis) The dazzling obscures judgement.

Thankfully at least some recommendations proposed no change to bans, being most of the first thirteen recommendations, but even these need to be sifted for their implications. For example #8 states "Implantation into the reproductive tract of a woman of an embryo created with genetic material provided by more than two people should continue to be prohibited." However it leaves open the option to 'create' an embryo in this way and this is confirmed in #26.

To make the numerous recommendations more palatable the authors, particularly in #22-#27, keep using the expression "as long as the activity satisfies all the criteria outlined in the amended Act and these embryos are not implanted into the body of a woman or allowed to develop for more than 14 days." Readers are meant to be reassured but these statements are irrelevant. The damage is done in the first part of the recommendations, and even in the recognisable refrain above, somehow the embryo can have hideous things

done to him or her with impunity for the first fourteen days and then be discarded or killed. Pity these poor human lives that are removed from the natural and rightful means of conception, and who are cut up, mixed, twisted and destroyed in the name of scientific progress. What enlightened people we are to endorse as “dazzling” this new depth of barbarism.

Any statement that endorses the creation of human embryos or embryo clones for experimentation is deeply disturbing. Cloning itself is bad enough, as it destroys a life in so called “therapeutic cloning”, manipulates another and denies that life the dignity of a natural conception, gestation, birth and identity. Whatever claims are made for the possibilities of such experiments must be rejected because the assault on human lives in this way can never be justified. The question at hand must end here. The question is not What can be achieved? but What are we doing? If the latter cannot be justified then we must not do it or seek any ends from it. Recommendations #22-#27 are utterly unjustifiable. You cannot treat human beings as mice or guinea pigs and you cannot change the definition of the embryo to suit these ends or make it more acceptable. This action is to serve justifying the killing of human life and no less. The nature of human life cannot be redefined to say it is other than what it is. Donna Cooper’s article, 'The Lockhart Review: Where now for Australia', 14 *JLM* 27, pp. 27-44, tabled by Senator Patterson, on p. 38 emphasises the utility of having the embryo “defined at a later stage than is currently provided for in the legislation”, to enable more research to be conducted. This utilitarian concept of human life is deeply sinister.

Why is there no stress on using adult stem cells, which have evidence of achievement in experiments without any moral problems, or why is there no promotion of using umbilical cords as sources of stem cells? The itch to use something new, irrespective of any moral implications, with only the end in sight, for example, a cure for cancer or cystic fibrosis is deeply flawed and must be resisted. However searching for ways to treat and heal these conditions is meritorious in itself, but the end does not justify the means.

The proposed definition of the human embryo in #28 (i) differentiates between the “fertilisation of a human oocyte by a human sperm” and the “first mitotic cell division” yet in all of this no clear statement is made to say that a human embryo is a human being with the same rights accorded as inherent to any human being.

Please reject the findings of the Lockhart Review Committee, Senator Patterson’s Bill and any similar proposals.

Yours sincerely,

Gerard Calilhanna