



WISCONSIN FAMILY ACTION
Marriage|Family|Life|Liberty

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Testimony in favor of Senate Bill 260
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Public Hearing, September 22, 2015
Julaine Appling
President of Wisconsin Family Action

Chairwoman Vukmir and members of the committee: thank you for holding a public hearing on this important bill, and for the opportunity to speak to you today. On behalf of Wisconsin Family Action, I am here to speak in favor of SB 260, the Aborted Fetal Body Parts bill. It is almost impossible for me to overstate how much our organization is in favor of this bill. And we believe that the Assembly Substitute Amendment appropriately strengthens the bill.

Let me begin by addressing the concerns UW-Madison scientists have raised about the use of existing cells lines derived from the tissue of aborted babies for research here in Wisconsin. Human organ and tissue donation is fraught with such potential ethical and human dignity concerns that as a state we have enacted extensive laws covering the donation of human organs and tissue to ensure the ethical, dignified, humanitarian transfer of organs for life-saving and research purposes. According to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, “The field of organ and tissue donation...is one of the most regulated areas of health care today.”¹

Ladies and gentlemen, with the exception of the federal law prohibiting transfer for valuable consideration, we have no such laws covering the use of aborted fetal tissue. And we have great need to address this issue. While you and I may find the trafficking of organs and tissue ripped from a living baby in the womb absolutely abhorrent, some have no qualms. To quote from a UW-Madison chemistry professor, Laura Kiessling, as reported in the Wisconsin State Journal, “telling scientists they couldn’t use the [cells derived from aborted fetal tissue] ‘would be like all of a sudden telling people that microwaves can’t be used to cook things anymore.’”² Cooking food in a microwave is the moral equivalent of using cells derived from an aborted baby? I cannot understand this thinking. While under the Assembly Substitute Amendment to this bill, it is quite clear that Professor Kiessling would be able to continue to use the cell line derived from aborted fetal tissue; her attitude toward the use of aborted fetal tissue cell lines highlights the need for this bill.

Aborted babies are not commodities to be transferred on the open market, even for scientific purposes. Some important research may require the use of fetal tissue. Very well. Researchers can use the donated tissue of babies lost through stillbirth—where we actually have a certificate of death³—or miscarriage. And they can acquire it the same way they would the tissue of an adult or minor donor on the other side of the womb. We have laws for these things for a purpose. The trafficking of aborted fetal body parts has fallen under the radar of those laws and it is high time that we correct that loophole and uphold the ethical, dignified, humanitarian procurement and transfer of donated organs and tissues from preborn babies.

¹ *Legislation and Policy* page, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, <http://organdonor.gov/legislation/>.

² *Fetal tissue ban could impact medical research in Wisconsin*, David Wahlberg, Wisconsin State Journal, August 10, 2015.

³ Wisconsin Statute 69.145