

TESTIMONY
IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 1979
"THE 1989 ABORTION CONTROL ACT"

Submitted by:

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Dear Chairman and Others of the Committee:

My name is Susan Karlovich. I respectfully submit this testimony in support of House Bill 1979--the 1989 Abortion Control Act. I strongly urge your support of this bill. I now wish to specifically address that portion of the bill pertaining to fetal tissue experimentation and transplant.

There is much being said for the prospect of possible treatments using fetal tissue to benefit those with a variety of dreadful diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinsons, and Juvenile-Onset Diabetes; however, there still seems to be a great deal of confusion regarding these procedures and the ethical questions surrounding them.

The issue of fetal tissue transplants is of special interest to me, because I have lived for 30 years with one of the diseases transplant proponents hope to "cure" using fetal tissue--namely Juvenile-Onset Diabetes. This is a serious condition in which a patient's body does not produce enough insulin to properly metabolize sugar in the blood.

I also suffer from many other complications related to this disease, which include diabetic retinopathy (95% visual loss), diabetic neuropathy (nerve damage in extremities), and diabetic nephropathy (loss of 75% of kidney function), and hypertension (high blood pressure). With all of these problems, I remain convinced that fetal tissue experimentation will never yield any antecedent good from the atrocity of abortion. Let's consider just the pancreatic transplant experimentation which pertains to diabetes.

Techniques used vary among researchers; but in general, fetal pancreatic tissue transplants involve extracting special "islet" cells from the pancreases of aborted children and grafting them to the body of the diabetic patient. The theory behind the transplants is that the transplanted islet cells will continue to mature and eventually begin to produce insulin in the body of the recipient.

Researchers consider tissue at the 16-24 week stage of gestation as "optimal" for pancreatic tissue harvesting--the second trimester. In previous transplants, researchers have used two to four aborted infants per transplant, but say that they need tissue from "25 aborted infants to provide enough cells for transplant to provide enough insulin daily for an adult diabetic".

This raises the grim question of the deliberate delay of abortions into later trimesters where the occurrence of babies aborted alive are more common. When this happens, no attempt is made to render reasonable care; because their emphasis is on the abortion and subsequent harvesting of fresh tissue and organs--not on preserving the life of a child which is thought of as a "complication" of abortion. The question is--do these babies die from the abortion or from the act of harvesting "spare parts".

The aborted babies bodies are then given to a medical technician who removes and places the tiny pancreases (the size of a fingernail) into tubes and into a cooler to transport to the lab where they are typed, chopped into tiny flakes, and then exposed to 95% oxygen culture for up to ten days to kill off the non-insulin producing cells. All of this is being done for

the sake of diabetes research, yet "the results so far are mixed or inconclusive" according to Dr. Everett K. Spees, transplant surgeon and one of the researchers involved. In patients who underwent the procedure, says Spees, "some have died from conditions unrelated to the fetal surgery; some have shown slight to significant reductions in their insulin requirement, while others show no effect or now actually need more insulin".

While suffering with these severe complications of this disease, I am not without empathy for others who also suffer; but regardless of what type of disease fetal tissue is being used to treat, the implications of this are horrifying. To conceive a child for the sole purpose of killing him/her to help another person is a violation of the human rights of that child. We are not talking about a piece of raw material or a mere commodity, but rather an innocent human life. What type of a threat is this going to pose to women and their babies? Will a woman with a problem pregnancy be able to be certain that she and her child will receive the best possible care when her child may be viewed as a potential source of "spare parts"?

In short, if it is not stopped now, we can predict the arrival of an enormous industry in fetal tissue, one which will feast off of not only unborn babies but also others who are cognitively-impaired: anencephalic babies and patients in so-called persistent vegetative states, for example. The number of abortions would necessarily rise for a whole host of reasons. Abortionists will enjoy a windfall of profit. The abortion industry (a multi-billion-dollar enterprise) is already the least-regulated big business in America. All of this is but an echo of Nuremburg.

The insight of Nuremburg taught us that when we rely upon others to subjugate innocent humans to the point where they lie helpless and their bodies are delivered up to us to be used or abused as we wish, then no antecedent good, nor any subsequent scientific yield, will absolve us from our responsibility for allowing it to happen.

The Nazi doctors had learned the ethic of their professions--that a physician may not relieve one person's affliction at the cost of another's suffering. They contrived to believe that if someone else did all the afflicting and they then did all the healing, they could divide the responsibility down the middle. The world judged otherwise, and condemned them for it all. Thus, in my estimation, research and experimentation with human fetal tissue is compromised ethically when that tissue is a remnant of a forcibly-aborted human being. I strongly believe that many abortion proponents already realize this, but I fear that many others have only the faintest understanding of the slope down which this practice is rapidly taking us.

Ironically as all this goes on, we are witnessing animal rights activists protesting the use of animals for experimentation in hospitals and schools. While I am an animal lover myself, I feel strongly that we who respect human life should be protesting and crying out all the louder against these vile and hideous experiments using pre-born children.

Again, I urge you to support House Bill 1979--the 1989 Abortion Control Act. And, thank you for the opportunity to provide my testimony.