MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Members of the Missouri Senate

FROM: Gerard Nieters, Legislative Director
Pam Fichter, President

DATE: February 17, 2010

RE: Opposition to SB 922 - Legislation for job creation with no Pro-Life Protective Language

NOTE: This memo is applicable to any economic development legislation that comes before the Missouri Senate.

SB 922 provides certain tax incentives for local job creation in the science and technology industries. Missouri Right to Life (MRL) opposes SB 922 because, without restrictions, that work could include embryonic stem cell research or even fetal research. Missouri Right to Life opposes any legislation that provides public funding or tax credits for the science and technology industries generally and the human life science industry in particular that does not contain pro-life protective language. Missouri Right to Life has remained consistent in this position and has made this body aware of its position.

Missouri Right to Life has suggested the following pro-life protective language be added to the bill that would assure that innocent human lives are not sacrificed in life sciences research:

"It is not the intent of this section to include research as defined by Article III, section 38 (d) of the Missouri Constitution and this section shall be subject to the provisions of section 196.1127."

Without this language, Missouri Right to Life is opposed to SB 922 and any other Economic Development legislation that does not have clear pro-life protective language.

We continue to be told that these economic development bills are not cloning bills and not embryonic stem cell bills. If that is the case, why the hesitation to include the requested life protecting language?

Generally, Missouri Right to Life has no interest in business development bills. They are not MRL's issue. But when that development is achieved at the price of even one innocent human life, we will speak for those who have no voice.

You may claim that Missouri Right to Life is crying "Wolf!" However, the facts that follow certainly reflect a real threat to human life that demands protective language in these business development bills.

One of the principal ways that cloning firms and institutions will make money consists of using cloning to establish lines of human embryonic stem cells, on which various drug formulas may be tested. In fact, the Wisconsin scientist who invented the process that keeps human stem cells alive in cultures, James Thomson, has formed at least one company to do exactly that. As was reported in The Capital Times of Madison Wisconsin in 2007, "The [company] is growing stem cells into adult heart cells that could make the testing of experimental drugs safer and more efficient." The Madison Times, Feb. 7, 2007. The news article went on to report, "[T]he research faces intense opposition from some social conservatives because days-old human embryos are destroyed as scientists extract the cells. Critics argue it is unethical to destroy human life in the name of science."

James Thomson may be an eminent scientist, but no one, whether a scientist, businessman, or abortionist, should have a license to kill innocent human beings. Nor should the State of Missouri fund research or give tax credits or incentives to research institutions who sponsor the killing of human beings in order to obtain stem cells for research.

The U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) says that the development of any new drug now requires at least $500 million and 8 ½ years of testing. See its summary, "FDA and the Drug Development Process: How the Agency Ensures That Drugs are Safe and Effective," February, 2002, p. 1 (http://www.fda.gov/opacom/factsheets/justthefacts/ 17drgdev.html). A large part of the cost arises from the requirement to test potential drugs on at least two different species of animals. FDA, "The New Drug Development Process: Pre-Clinical Research," on-line at http://www.fda.gov/cder/handbook/. Testing potential pharmaceuticals on batches of human tissue cells, such as heart cells, would give more accurate and quicker results than animal studies. The FDA has moved on this by recently approving the first human trials of human embryonic stem cell research by the Geron Corporation; the destruction of innocent human life in the creation of pharmaceuticals is no longer a hypothetical but is a reality.

The National Institute of Health has described how embryonic stem cells can be used in the testing of drugs. It says that human embryonic stem cells can "provide material for testing that may improve the safety and efficacy of human drugs. For example, new drugs are not generally tested on human heart cells because no human heart cell lines exist. Instead, researchers rely on animal models. Because of important . . . differences between animal and human hearts, however, drugs that are toxic to the human heart have occasionally entered clinical trials [tests on humans], sometimes resulting in death. Human ES cell-derived heart cells may be extremely valuable in identifying such drugs before they are used in clinical trials, ..." NIH, Regenerative Medicine 2006, Chap. 1, "Embryonic Stem Cells," page 4 (citations and table omitted) (http://stemcells.nih.gov/info/scireport/2006report.htm).

You will also find attached an article written by the renowned Dr. David Prentice, Senior Fellow for Life Sciences at the Family Research Council that explains the necessity for clear definitions when delving into benefits for life sciences research.