

Dear Legislators,

The Missouri Science Innovation & Reinvestment Act (MOSIRA) sets up a fund and a process by which companies that deal in research (plant, agriculture, or life science) can invest money into a state fund that would then be used for start-up money for research businesses including those engaging in life science research. This fund would be controlled and governed by The Missouri Technology Corporation (MTC), which is closely connected to the supporters of human cloning and embryonic stem cell research (ESCR).

Missouri Right to Life has worked very hard for the last several years to add the protective language of 196.1127 to the MOSIRA legislation that would prevent any public funds from being used for human cloning or ESCR. We were unable to do so until this year when the MOSIRA legislation with 196.1127 passed the Missouri House as a stand-alone bill.

However, the Senate passed MOSIRA without 196.1127 by combining it with other legislation including tax credits for pregnancy resource centers. Missouri Right to Life strongly supports extending these tax credits but opposes doing so by opening the door to public funding of life-destroying research.

Other groups have proposed compromise language to MOSIRA in the Missouri House and Senate that, instead of placing the ban on public funding of human cloning and embryonic stem cell research contained in 196.1127, would allow this research as long as it's reported. These groups would rely instead on the contract that the MTC has with the research entities to not engage in this type of research, and assert that 196.1127 is unnecessary because there's no intention to use this funding for that purpose.

Our response to these assertions is as follows:

1. A contract can be changed at any time with the agreement of the parties involved. Both parties involved in the above contracts are known or likely supporters of research involving human cloning and ESCR.
2. If it is true that the parties involved do not want to use the public funds from MOSIRA for human cloning and ESCR, then why do they oppose language prohibiting it?
3. Why wait until life-destroying research is reported before seeking to ban it? Would we address any other threat against human life in such cavalier fashion?
4. The pro-life language of 196.1127 proposed by MRL is no more likely to be considered unconstitutional than would any legislation proposed in the future to address reported incidences of public funding of unethical research. Why not challenge that possibility now?
5. The Callahan opinion that the Missouri General Assembly has the right to appropriate funds is as likely to apply to 196.1127 as to any future legislative proposal allowing the legislature to stipulate who would or would not receive public funds.
6. A "trust but verify" approach relies on common understanding of terminology. The MTC and other supporters of human cloning and embryonic stem cell research have already shown that they are willing to coin their own definitions to attain their goals. This was blazingly clear in the Amendment 2 debate when human cloning was defined as the implantation of a cloned embryo rather than the creation of a cloned embryo. Their reporting may also reflect such creative definitions.

Missouri Right to Life calls on the Missouri House and Senate to add the protective language of 196.1127 to MOSIRA, either as a stand alone bill or if amended on to another bill, establishing in statute a ban on public funding of human cloning and embryonic stem cell research.

We also urge the House and Senate to vote to protect all life on every bill and not hold hostage the tax credits for pregnancy resource centers for the sake of business profits for unethical research. Missouri Right to Life also urges those who would compromise, to hold fast to pro-life principles when confronted by the threats of pro-cloning/ESCR legislators.

Sincerely,

Pam Fichter

Gerard Nieters

Susan Klein