

# CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF OHIO

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## Testimony in Support of SB 243

Human Cloning Prohibitions

May 18, 2010

Thank you Chairman Coughlin, members of the committee. My name is Jim Tobin. I am an Associate Director with the Catholic Conference of Ohio. We urge your support for SB 243. SB 243 prohibits knowingly performing or attempting to perform human and/or human-animal hybrid cloning.

Cloning is a depersonalized way to reproduce in which human beings are manufactured in the laboratory to preset specifications. It is not a worthy way to bring a new human being into the world. When done for stem cell research, it involves the moral wrong of all embryonic stem cell research (destroying an innocent human life for possible benefit to others), plus an additional wrong: it creates human beings solely in order to kill them for their cells. This is the ultimate reduction of a fellow human being to a mere means, to an instrument of other people's wishes.

The Catholic Church is not opposed to all stem cell research. Most stem cell research uses cells obtained from adult tissue, umbilical cord blood, and other sources that pose no moral problem. Useful stem cells have been found in bone marrow, blood, muscle, fat, nerves, and even in the pulp of baby teeth. Some of these cells are already being used to treat people with a wide variety of diseases. Researchers have even developed new non-destructive methods for producing cells with the properties of embryonic stem cells—for example, by “reprogramming” adult cells.

Issues surrounding stem cell research are indeed complex, emotional, and often confusing. All of us desire new cures and more effective medical treatments. Many well-intentioned persons believe that the potential good of future medical breakthroughs outweighs the need to protect human life from its very inception. The suffering of patients and families affected by devastating illness most certainly deserves our compassion and our committed response. However, this response should not be made at the expense of another human life. The equal protection of each human life, no matter how small, is one of our country's founding principles.

Thank you for this opportunity.