

CALIFORNIA RIGHT TO LIFE EDUCATION FUND

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“EMBRYONIC STEM CELL FUNDING IS WORSE THAN ABORTION”.

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Several prominent anti-abortion politicians, including Orrin Hatch and Bill Frist, joined the Senate majority in endorsing the public funding of embryonic stem cell research. To the casual observer it might appear that the arguments against abortion must be stronger than those against publicly funding the destruction of embryos. This conclusion, however, would be mistaken. The funding of destructive embryo research is actually worse than legal abortion.

Some might disagree, arguing that the continuing identity of a developing being means that embryo research cannot be better *or* worse than abortion. The politicians are wrong to say it is not as bad as abortion, but it is also wrong to say that it is worse. “All stages of life are stages of the same being. Each of us was once a human embryo. Each of us is just a human embryo that has grown up. And we have been alive the whole time we have been growing and developing—that is, since fertilization. If one of us had been killed at any time before we were born, a human life would have been lost. So abortion and lethal research on embryos are equally bad.”

Others might argue that, if there is any difference, abortion is the worse of the two. For abortion involves not only killing, but betrayal. In abortion, parents destroy an unborn child entrusted to them, who depends on them, a child whom they have a moral duty to nurture. By contrast, the scientist who dissects an embryo is not harming his own offspring. He wrongs life, but not necessarily the family. So how can one possibly contend that embryo research is worse?

Dehumanization

Let us take a closer look. Someone choosing abortion need not be completely set against life. She typically does not want abortion with all of her heart. Rather, she is filled with desperation and panic. She often has been, or fears she may be, abandoned or harmed by one or more persons whom she herself has trusted. Even if her fears are not so great that moral culpability is absent, she is not fully an enemy of her

unborn child. She may profoundly regret what she feels compelled to do. If only the circumstances were better, if only she had enough support, she would let her child live.

The abortion provider, of course, is not under such duress. He is not pressured by circumstances to perform abortions. And yet, in a sense, he too is only contingently against new life. He performs abortions only because his clients ask him to do them. By contrast, the scientist seeking funding for embryonic stem cell research wants to destroy life—and convince the public to pay for it. His lethal aim is not even contingent in the sense that “if only there were another possible route to cures,” no embryo killing would occur. There is, in fact, a shorter route, via adult stem cells. Would-be embryo researchers demand to be carried by the public down the longer and more uncertain path.

Moreover, almost all abortions aim to preclude an “unwanted child.” Of course, this is profoundly contrary to the care owed by parents, as has been mentioned. But abortion paradoxically reaffirms the very parent-child bond that it betrays. The fetus is unwanted precisely as a child who must eventually be cared for by her parents. They fear and reject her *because* she is their own offspring. Because she is their child, they feel a duty to care for her if she lives. Therefore, so that they may escape this duty, she must die. Both a parental relationship and a parental obligation are acknowledged by the act of abortion. Therein lies its tragedy.

Embryonic stem cell research, by contrast, is wholly dehumanizing. When parents turn the living human embryos they have begotten over to science, they not only forget them as children but also turn them into commodities, donate them for eventual body parts. The embryos become wholly instrumental, they become resources to be calculated and consumed. They are degraded before they are destroyed. Like human embryos created by cloning, they do not die as unwanted children, or even as human beings, but as things to be used and used up. No greater negation of human dignity is possible.

“Abortion and lethal research on embryos are equally bad.”

The End of Choice

Lastly, tax-funded embryonic stem cell research is worse than legal abortion for our public community. Legalizing abortion is not quite the same as desiring abortion. It is logically possible, even if unjust, for a legislature to be both anti-abortion and pro-choice, just as people could once be anti-apartheid and yet defer to the sovereignty of South Africa.

By contrast, no one in favor of funding embryonic stem cell research can say, "I'm not for killing embryos. I'm just pro-choice." Such legislators want human embryos to be dissected. Stems cells must be extracted. In states like California and New Jersey, where embryonic stem cell extraction is funded by the public, the law can no longer be labeled even euphemistically "pro-choice."

Even where abortion is publicly funded, the government does not insist on death. No officials are angry if funds previously allocated to subsidize abortion are left unused because women have freely chosen life. The abortion-related equivalent of embryonic stem cell funding would involve using taxes to pay women to abort their children, as part of scientific experiments aimed at distant and uncertain cures.

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Adult Blood Stem Cells in New Research reveals "Master Switches"

Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center scientists have found a set of "master switches" that keep adult blood-forming stem cells in their primitive state. Unlocking the switches' code may one day enable scientists to grow new blood cells for transplant into patients with cancer and other bone marrow disorders.

Scientists located the control switches not at the gene level, but farther down the protein production line in more recently discovered forms of ribonucleic acid, or RNA. MicroRNA molecules, once thought to be cellular junk, are now known to switch off activity of the larger RNA strands which allow assembly of the proteins that let cells grow and function. "Stem cells are poised to make proteins essential for maturing into blood cells, but microRNAs keep them locked in their place," says cancer researcher Curt Civin, M.D., Ph.D., who led the study. "We're looking for ways to flip these microRNA switches, to control when stem cells grow into new blood cells," says Robert Georgantas, Ph.D., research associate at the Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center and first and corresponding author of the study.

Upcoming Events

Sunvalley Mall Table Saturday, March 17

If you would like to join our dedicated volunteers for an hour or two at Sunvalley Mall in Concord on St. Patrick's Day, please contact this office at 925-944-5351 or e-mail callife@calright2life.org. Training will be provided. This is a wonderful way to share your prolife commitment and change hearts to make a Bay Area where soon abortion will neither be wanted nor needed.

Catholic Medical Association Monthly Bioethics Seminar on Double Effect Reasoning Tuesdays, March 20, April 17, May 15

San Francisco Guild of the Catholic Medical Association will sponsor a series of Tuesday evening seminars: March 20, April 17, and May 15 from 7:30-9:00 PM at Heart of Mary Center, 2580 McAllister St. San Francisco. Donation of \$30 is requested for the series. For further information contact Dr. George Maloof (415) 219-8719. Registrations may be mailed to P.O. Box 31855 San Francisco, CA 94131.

Rachel's Vineyard Retreat March 23-25

Do you know someone hurting after abortion? Still seeking peace years later? Experience the healing love of Jesus at Rachel's Vineyard Retreat, March 23-25 in the Sonoma Wine Country. Sponsored by After the Choice, the Diocese of Oakland's post-abortion outreach. Retreat includes sharing of stories, scripture-based spiritual exercises, sacraments and a memorial service. Open to women, men, couples and family members touched by abortion. Cost: \$150 per person, \$200 per couple. Financial assistance available. For a complete information packet, call 510-267-8335 or e-mail Monika at Mrodman@oakdiocese.org. Inquiries and participation are strictly confidential.

Students for Life Annual Conference April 21

Notre Dame de Namur University in Belmont CA. The topic is "Life-Camera-Action" and we will be sharing our experience dealing with the media on life issues – before cameras – and our ongoing actions for the Culture of Life. If you are interested in joining us, or helping in the preparation for this event, contact our office at 925-944-5351 or by e-mail callife@calright2life.org.



NATIONAL PRO-LIFE T-SHIRT DAY

The annual event is set for **April 24**. American Life League encourages everyone, especially students, to wear pro-life apparel on this day to show

the nation just how many of us are pro-life.

The theme for this year's T-shirt is "What part of ABORTION don't you understand. April 24 is a day for pro-lifers all across the country to support of the sanctity of human beings' lives by wearing pro-life shirts. Join thousands nationwide by showing everyone that we are the majority, that we are a strong and determined voice for the babies.

The official shirt of ALL's National Pro-life T-shirt Day is available online at <http://www.prolifegear.com>. Additional information is available at <http://www.NationalProLifeTshirtDay.com>.

**Do you know someone who might be considering abortion?
Make sure they get the facts first!
A LIFE depends on it...
1-800-395-HELP (4357)**

Around the Office

www.goodsearch.com What if California Right to Life Education Fund earned a penny every time you searched the Internet? Well, now we can!

GoodSearch.com is a new search engine that donates half its revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. You use it just as you would any search engine, and it's powered by Yahoo!, so you get great results.

Just go to www.goodsearch.com and be sure to enter California Right to Life Education Fund (Walnut Creek, CA) as the charity you want to support. Just 500 people searching four times a day will raise about \$7,300 in a year without anyone spending a dime! That's 25% of our annual budget. And, be sure to spread the word to your family and friends! If you have any questions, or need help setting up your computer to use www.goodsearch.com contact Cecelia Cody at 925-944-5351 and she will happily assist you!

Do we have your current e-mail address?

While the newsletter continues to be our normal method of communication, we often need to send out one or two e-mail blasts on an average week. We often receive news or special event announcements after the newsletter goes to print that we want to get out to our membership promptly.

Currently we have over 400 of our members on our e-mail list. Do we have yours? Are you on our e-mail address list? Do you think we have your current e-mail address, but haven't heard from us via e-mail in quite awhile? If you have changed your e-mail address or internet/e-mail providers, have you sent us an e-mail to update your address in our system? Send your additions, updates and changes to callife@calright2life.org.

Mall Table Volunteers Needed

We would like to expand our "Mall Table Ministry"; however, our current list of volunteers is stretched to the limit. If you would like to join our cadre of dedicated volunteers for a couple hours a month at Sunvalley Mall in Concord, please contact this office at 925-944-5351 or e-mail callife@calright2life.org. **Training will be provided**, and this is a wonderful way to share your prolife commitment and change hearts.

Recent mall tables have allowed us to share options with several women who felt that they had no choice. Imagine the warm feeling of knowing you may have saved the life of a precious pre-born, just by sitting at a table for a couple hours a month and sharing resources available to these people who feel they have NO CHOICE.

Thank you Donors!

In order to be able to continue to serve, we rely on your ongoing support. Please consider becoming a monthly donor in 2007. Your donations, large or small, are the lifeblood of our efforts providing materials to students and giving our volunteers the resources needed as they serve in your name to spread the message of the culture of life from the single-cell stage to natural death. A special thank you to all our donors, especially monthly contributors.

February is Black History Month

With Black History Month reminding us of the efforts of African-American leaders before them, a group of black pro-life advocates gathered in Washington earlier this month to discuss ways to begin the end of abortion. The National Black Pro-Life Union hosted an event at the Capitol featuring a bipartisan group of lawmakers and leaders of the black community.

"Abortion kills more black people -- as most of you in this room already know -- than other deaths combined," NBPLU president Day Gardner told those attending. "Abortion is a silent killer because we don't talk about it as a people.

The good news is that the pro-life side is winning. America is becoming more and more pro-life everyday." "Eliminating abortion may seem to some a rather daunting task; to some it may seem impossible," she conceded. "But I believe in God -- and with Him nothing is impossible. For this task we shall need to put God first, and then we must have our best leaders follow."

WHO IS CALIFORNIA RIGHT TO LIFE?

This is the newsletter of California Right to Life **Education Fund**, a 501-c-3 organization established to educate the public about pro-life issues. Donations to the EDUCATION FUND are **tax-deductible** and can be sent to P.O. Box 4343, Walnut Creek, CA 94596-0343.

California Right to Life **Committee, Inc.** is a 501-c-4 organization providing information on legislative issues affecting the right to life, and pro-life political advocacy. **CRLC, Inc. is not permitted**, under IRS regulations, to offer a tax deduction for donations. \$24.99 annually is requested for a subscription to the CRLC legislative email updates list and can be sent to 1920 Monument Blvd #309, Concord, CA 94520.

Both are affiliates of American Life League, headed by Judie Brown, and share the same "no-exceptions, no excuses" beliefs and the same dedication to promoting the Culture of Life, respecting all innocent human life from the single-cell stage to natural death.