



## PROPOSAL 2

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### UNREGULATED EMBRYO DESTRUCTION

*A good result can never justify intrinsically unlawful means.*

- Pope Benedict XVI

Advocates of embryo research have placed on the November general election ballot a proposal that seeks to allow for the unregulated destruction of human embryos. The proposed constitutional amendment would also allow for state law to be changed so that human cloning would no longer be banned in the State of Michigan. Embryo destructive research and human cloning go hand in hand; essentially, you cannot pursue the former without the latter. While more than 70 different treatments for debilitating diseases have been discovered by research using adult stem cells, which the Catholic Church strongly supports, Proposal 2 disregards these life-affirming advancements and seeks to promote the intrinsically evil practice of human embryo destruction. Due to the morally illicit nature of this proposal, the Catholic bishops of Michigan encourage all Catholics and people of good will to vote against Proposal 2 on November 4.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church in paragraph 2274 speaks to the Church's protection of the human embryo: "Since it must be treated from conception as a person, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed, as far as possible, like any other human being." The universal Church has spoken clearly

and compassionately in favor of human life, and has supported with great vigor efforts among those in public office to protect the human embryo. The United Nations has passed a human cloning ban while several other industrialized nations such as Germany, France, Canada and Australia have similar laws. Opposition to human cloning and human embryo research in no way represents a distinctly religious or moral argument, as objections to treating early human life as a mere object or commodity in the laboratory transcends religious and political divisions.

The Catholic Church in Michigan has joined a grassroots organization titled MiCAUSE, Michigan Citizens Against Unrestricted Science and Experimentation, that will work to defeat Proposal 2. It is of the belief of MiCAUSE that enshrining in the state constitution a policy that would allow for the unrestricted destruction of human embryos, while weakening the state's cloning ban, would be a harmful step backward for the number one pro-life state in the country. This FOCUS publication is intended to analyze the effects of Proposal 2, and to help Michigan Catholics understand the damage the proposal will inflict upon the State of Michigan and its continued defense of human dignity.

# Questions and Answers About Proposal 2 and Human Embryo Research

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## WHAT ARE EXISTING STATE LAWS RELATED TO EMBRYO DESTRUCTIVE RESEARCH?

Michigan has two laws that address human embryo research. The first is a statute from 1978 that prohibits the destruction of the human embryo for research purposes. The second is the state's cloning ban, which was enacted in 1998. While it is illegal to destroy a human embryo for research in Michigan, it is not illegal to research that embryo's stem cells if the embryo was destroyed elsewhere. Human embryonic stem cell research is not illegal in Michigan. It has been ongoing since 2003 at the University of Michigan Center for Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research, which receives both federal (taxpayer) and private dollars. In fact, the University has doubled its staff of human embryo researchers since the Center opened. Proponents of Proposal 2, however, publicly claim that human embryonic stem cell research is illegal in Michigan and that jobs are leaving the state.

## HOW DOES HUMAN CLONING RELATE TO EMBRYO RESEARCH AND PROPOSAL 2?

In human cloning, the DNA from the nucleus of a person's body cell is inserted into an egg whose own genetic material has been removed, and the egg is then stimulated to begin embryonic development. The resulting cloned embryo would genetically be an almost identical twin to the person supplying the body cell. This overlaps with embryo research as human cloning may be done to create an embryo who will be destroyed to provide stem cells genetically matched to a patient, so the cells will not be rejected as foreign tissue. 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.

Contrary to the claims of its supporters, Proposal 2 does absolutely nothing to protect Michigan's ban on human cloning. The only way to strengthen protections against human cloning would be to place the ban in the state constitution, which the proposal fails to do. There is nothing in this proposed constitutional amendment that protects the state's human cloning ban. In fact, if the Legislature were to

enact a law that weakens the cloning ban, as Senate Bill 52 would do, Proposal 2 would allow that bill to become law.

## AREN'T THE EMBRYOS JUST GOING TO BE THROWN OUT ANYWAY? WHY NOT USE THEM FOR RESEARCH?

This argument is simply invalid. For it to be consistent, society would then have to deem as disposable the terminally ill and condemned prisoners. "Using" the human embryos does not accurately describe embryonic stem cell research. The reality is that the living human embryo is willingly destroyed by the researcher in order to extract the embryo's stem cells. Besides, the fact that an embryonic human being is at risk of being abandoned by his or her parents does not give the government the right to destroy that infant human life.

The argument also fails to consider the long-term consequences of human embryo research. When the very limited number of human embryos have been destroyed, from where will the additional embryos come? The answer, as witnessed in both California and England, is egg extraction, a process that is extremely painful for women and opens the door for the exploitation of minorities, the poor and the most vulnerable. Embryo destructive research is neither pro-life nor consistent with the Church's teaching on social justice.

## WHAT BENEFITS HAVE COME FROM EMBRYO DESTRUCTIVE RESEARCH?

None. There has not been one treatment or cure for any debilitating disease since embryonic stem cells were first extracted from living human embryos over a decade ago. Since that time California, for example, has passed a bond proposal that uses \$300 million per year for 10 years in taxes to fund human embryo research. California scientists are now publicly acknowledging that the state's prohibition on buying and selling women's eggs is an impediment to human embryo research.

**WHAT BENEFITS HAVE COME FROM STEM CELL RESEARCH THAT DOES NOT DESTROY LIVING HUMAN EMBRYOS?**

Researchers and scientists from the most prominent institutions in the country cite more than 70 debilitating diseases that either have been treated or cured with the advancements made with adult stem cells. The extraction of these cells do no harm to the donor person and can be found in numerous locations throughout the human body, including umbilical cord blood, the amniotic fluid that surrounds unborn babies, the placenta, dental pulp, and numerous others. Sickle cell anemia, lymphoma, leukemia, brain cancer, multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injury, corneal damage and many other medical conditions have benefited from adult stem cell research. Proposal 2 does nothing to advance the progress that has been made with adult stem cells.

that Harvard University biologists had transformed one type of pancreas cell into another, giving scientists a new way to grow replacement tissue. Researchers involved in these studies have all cited the ability to move forward with stem cell therapies while avoiding the destruction of human embryos.

**IF PROPOSAL 2 WERE TO PASS, HOW WOULD EMBRYO RESEARCH BE REGULATED?**

It wouldn't. In fact, it would be illegal to place any regulations or restrictions on human embryo research in Michigan. If Proposal 2 were to pass, human embryo destruction and research would become the first industry to be completely immune from any local or state laws. According to the proposed constitutional amendment, no laws shall be enacted that "prevent, restrict, or discourage stem cell research..." History has proven time and again

## *The Flaws of Proposal 2:*

- Allows for the unregulated destruction of and experimentation on human embryos
- Opens the door to human cloning in Michigan
- Prohibits Legislature from placing restrictions on human embryo destruction
- Fails to promote stem cell research that does not destroy human embryos

**HAVE OTHER RESEARCH ADVANCEMENTS BEEN MADE IN STEM CELL RESEARCH?**

Yes, and they do not necessitate the destruction of human embryos. Last November two separate groups of scientists, one in the United States and the other in Japan, succeeded in reprogramming human skin cells into embryonic-like cells. These "Induced Pluripotent Stem" (iPS) cells were able to differentiate into any other type of human tissue, meaning they perform the same functions as those sought by supporters of embryo research. Many prominent scientists have since abdicated human embryo research in favor of iPS cells, including Dr. James Thomson, the individual who first isolated stem cells from embryos and one of the authors of the iPS studies. In August, a separate group of researchers in Japan announced they had derived embryonic-like cells from the wisdom teeth of a 10-year old girl. Later that month, the journal *Nature* reported

that science without regulation or oversight presents tremendous dangers to the human community. The lack of legislative oversight and morally flawed nature of this proposal have convinced both the Republican Senate Majority Leader and the Democratic Speaker of the House, along with numerous other legislators from both political parties, to oppose Proposal 2.

*Embryo destructive research is neither pro-life nor consistent with the Church's teaching on social justice.*

# *The ballot wording for Proposal 2 reads:*

## A PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO ADDRESS HUMAN EMBRYO AND HUMAN EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH IN MICHIGAN

The proposed constitutional amendment would:

- Expand use of human embryos for any research permitted under federal law subject to the following limits: the embryos—
  - are created for fertility treatment purposes;
  - are not suitable for implantation or are in excess of clinical needs;
  - would be discarded unless used for research;
  - were donated by the person seeking fertility treatment.
- Provide that stem cells cannot be taken from human embryos more than 14 days after cell division begins.
- Prohibit any person from selling or purchasing human embryos for stem cell research.
- Prohibit state and local laws that prevent, restrict or discourage stem cell research, future therapies and cures.

Should this proposal be adopted?

Yes

**No**

A majority yes vote would enshrine in the state constitution the destruction of human embryos, open the door for human cloning, and prohibit state or local governments from placing any regulations or restrictions on human embryo destruction.

A majority **NO** vote would maintain Michigan's prohibition on destroying human embryos for research, and allow researchers to move forward with stem cell therapies that do not involve the destruction of human embryos.

## *Proposal 2 Goes 2 Far: Vote No on Proposal 2*

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