



Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities

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STEM CELL REALITY CHECK # 3

Myth: “Excess embryos are going to be discarded anyway”

Reality: Not necessarily. Today, parents can preserve “excess” embryos for future pregnancies as well as donate them to other couples. Under proposed NIH guidelines, parents will be asked to consider having them destroyed for federally-funded research instead.

In a recent study, 59% of parents who initially planned to discard their embryos after three years later changed their minds, choosing another pregnancy or donation to infertile couples. *New England Journal of Medicine*, July 5, 2001.

With the NIH guidelines, these embryos might have already been destroyed.

What’s more, we now know that the scientists calling for federal funds have themselves moved on to *creating* human embryos solely to destroy them for stem cells. So much for the “discarded anyway” argument.

But what scientists or parents might do with the embryos is not the issue. The issue is:

Should the government *use taxpayers’ money for research which requires destroying human embryos?*

No Administration of either party has ever done so.

We believe such unethical research shouldn’t be done at all. But if anyone does so, it must be at *their expense* and on *their conscience* – not that of the American taxpayers. Embryonic stem cells have not helped a single human patient. By contrast, adult stem cells and other ethically acceptable alternatives have helped hundreds of thousands of patients, and new clinical uses expand almost weekly.

Let’s fund promising medical research that everybody can live with.

Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops - www.usccb.org