

June 12, 2019

c/o The Honorable Mark Pocan
1421 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Pocan, Deutch, DelBene, Speier, Raskin, Nadler, DeGette, Lee, Lofgren, and Khanna,

We write to offer our strong support for your amendment to ***H.R. 2740–Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, Legislative Branch, Defense, State, Foreign Operations, and Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, 2020.***

Earlier this month, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced new restrictions on research using fetal tissue. These restrictions will delay the development of new treatments for a wide range of serious diseases. This policy will prevent the use of an essential biomedical research tool that has led to many advances in human health. We are deeply concerned about the delayed development of new therapies and the loss of scientific knowledge that will result from this policy, and strongly support your attempts to prevent its implementation.

Historically, research using fetal tissue has been critical for scientific and medical advances that have saved the lives of millions of people, including the development of vaccines against polio, rubella, measles, chickenpox, adenovirus, rabies, and treatments for debilitating diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, cystic fibrosis, and hemophilia. Fetal tissue was also essential for the development of a therapy to prevent the transmission of HIV (Truvada).

Fetal tissue remains critical for on-going clinical research on potential treatments for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), spinal cord injury, Parkinson's disease, and human development. It is similarly important for testing new therapies and as a source of cells for therapies that offer the potential to improve the treatment of major public health problems.

The existing legal and ethical frameworks for fetal tissue research provide rigorous and appropriate oversight, ensuring that the tissue is obtained legally and with donor consent. We are concerned about the potential chilling effect of this policy on biomedical research.

For these reasons, we are fully supportive of your amendment to prevent the implementation of this misguided and harmful policy. We hope to work in partnership with the federal government to ensure the research community's continued commitment to the highest ethical standards. America's investments in biomedical research should be driven based on the best science, and the best opportunities to cure the diseases that affect Americans.

Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

AIDS Action Baltimore
Alliance for Aging Research
American Academy of HIV Medicine
American Academy of Neurology
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Academy of Pediatrics

American Physiological Society
American Society for Cell Biology
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
American Society of Hematology
American Thoracic Society
APLA Health
Associated Medical Schools of New York
Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of American Universities
Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities
Axis Advocacy
Brown University
Coalition for the Life Sciences
Columbia University Irving Medical Center
Cornell University
Council on Governmental Relations
Duke University
Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation
Endocrine Society
Equity Forward
Harvard University
HIV Medicine Association
Infectious Diseases Society of America
International Society for Stem Cell Research
ISCT, International Society for Cell & Gene Therapy
Jacobs Institute of Women's Health
Johns Hopkins University
NASTAD
National Alliance for Eye and Vision Research
NMAC
Princeton University
Professional Association of Social Workers in HIV/AIDS
Research!America
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society of Family Planning
Stanford University
Stony Brook University
SUNY Upstate Medical University
Texans for Cures
The American Association of Immunologists
The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research
The National Multiple Sclerosis Society
The Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving Cures
Treatment Action Group
Tuberous Sclerosis Alliance
UC San Francisco
UCLA
United States People living with HIV Caucus
University at Buffalo Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences

University of California San Diego
University of California System
University of California, Davis
University of Oregon
University of Pennsylvania
University of Pittsburgh
University of Washington
UW Medicine
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Yale University