



## Life Issues Forum

### Missouri: The “Clone Me” State? by Richard M. Doerflinger

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The campaign to clone human embryos for destructive research has taken some hits this year. Two major journals, *Science* and the *New England Journal of Medicine*, had to admit they printed false claims about progress toward so-called “therapeutic” cloning. Many scientists now admit they simply don’t know whether human embryo cloning can work, let alone produce a cell therapy for any disease.

Yet politics can run on its own track, fueled by money and power rather than common sense. Take Amendment 2, a ballot initiative to be placed before the voters of Missouri on November 7. It would give researchers a new *constitutional right* to clone and destroy human embryos – although such activity is punishable as a crime in Canada, Germany, Australia and other nations with much weaker pro-life movements than ours. Many expect the amendment to pass.

The key to success here has been twofold. The first element is money and lots of it. In July the Associated Press reported that supporters had raised \$16 million – \$15.4 million of it from multi-billionaire James Stowers and his wife. Years ago the Stowers used \$2 billion to found the Stowers Institute for Medical Research in Kansas City, which stands to reap enormous

benefits if Missouri becomes the cloning capital of the world. One is tempted to say that the man who has everything now wants to buy a state constitution to protect his interests.

The other key is sheer misinformation, spread through the media using those millions of dollars. Voters in the “show-me state” are being shown a fabric of illusions. Let me name three of those illusions.

First, Amendment 2 claims to ban any attempt to “clone a human being.” But it defines “clone a human being” as using an already-cloned human embryo to initiate a pregnancy that could result in “the creation of a human fetus” or “the birth of a human being.” Since the medical definition of “fetus” begins after the eighth week of development, this creates a large window to clone and grow human embryos and then kill them. The fake ban on “cloning” is really a mandate for abortion by the eighth week.

Second, the amendment says it allows only “stem cell research permitted under federal law.” The unwary will think this means real limits, since the federal government does not fund research destroying human embryos. But – surprise! – the amendment defines “permitted under federal law” to mean actions that federal law does not *prohibit* even in the private sector. This means you can do almost anything, since virtually all federal laws against lethal human experimentation deal only with funding. There is no federal law against murdering adults for their stem cells, only state laws. This constitutional amendment would nullify Missouri’s state laws, to the extent that they get in the way of “stem cell research.”

Third, the web site promoting this “stem cell research and cures initiative” declares that “over 70 diseases and injuries could benefit from stem cell research.” In fact patients with over 70 conditions *have* been shown in peer-reviewed journals to benefit from stem cells – but these treatments all use *adult* stem cells, which supporters of Amendment 2 wrongly dismiss as having

very limited use. Meanwhile, they themselves talk of “cures” for 70 diseases from cloning and embryonic stem cells, without a scrap of direct evidence for their grandiose claim.

We can all hope that voters in The Show-Me State will realize they are being sold a bill of goods. No one wants to be known as hailing from The Clone-Me State.

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