



Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

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S. 469: Threat to Unborn Children, Women and Families

Through S. 469, Congress for the first time would require taxpayers to pay for the laboratory creation, manipulation and destruction of human life. While marketed as an aid to veterans rendered infertile by service-related disabilities, S. 469 has more ominous implications.

- Through the Dickey amendment to annual Labor/HHS appropriations bills, Congress has decided in 1995 and every year since *not* to fund research in which human embryos are discarded, destroyed, or subjected to greater risk of harm or death than unborn children experience in their mother's wombs. It has long been recognized that *in vitro* fertilization, making human lives in the hostile environment of a glass dish in the laboratory, cannot live up to this standard.
- Federal statistics show that the likelihood of a pregnancy is about 30% when two embryos (on average) are transferred to a woman's womb. That is an 85% death rate for the embryos. This does not count embryos lost or discarded in the laboratory that are never transferred to a womb, or deaths from the embryo freezing and thawing also allowed under this bill.
- A growing body of medical evidence shows an increased risk of premature births and some serious birth defects among those children who are born alive after IVF.
- There are serious risks to women (whether veterans, their spouses or egg donors) who are given powerful drugs to make them produce many eggs at once. As many as 10% of women taking high doses of these drugs develop "ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome" (OHSS), which can lead to infertility, organ failure or death.
- Medicaid and other federal programs, and most private health plans, do *not* cover IVF, a very costly elective procedure with a high failure rate.
- The VA system by regulation already covers all other fertility assistance, including artificial insemination (by spouse or donor). No one has explained what condition can only be addressed by IVF. Congress should focus on improving genuine treatment to restore a healthy reproductive system, and adoption assistance where needed.

For documentation see "In Vitro Fertilization: The Human Cost," at www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/reproductive-technology/upload/In-Vitro-Fertilization-The-Human-Cost-2014.pdf.