

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5571

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Children & Family Services & Corrections, February 28, 2003

Title: An act relating to human cloning.

Brief Description: Prohibiting human cloning.

Sponsors: Senators Franklin, Stevens, Hargrove, Esser, Mulliken and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Children & Family Services & Corrections: 2/18/03, 2/28/03 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5571 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Stevens, Chair; Carlson, Deccio, Hargrove, McAuliffe and Regala.

Staff: Edith Rice (786-7444)

Background: Cloning is a process used by scientists to create a genetically identical organism by asexual reproduction; that is, without the fertilization of an egg by a sperm. Sheep, cows and mice have all been cloned successfully. The scientific procedure used to create a clone is called somatic cell nuclear transfer, or nuclear transplantation. The process involves removing the nucleus of an egg cell (oocyte) and replacing it with the nucleus of an adult body (somatic) cell. If the procedure is successful, this cell will divide several times and can be placed in a uterus. If it implants and continues to grow, it can eventually become viable. Organisms created this way are genetically identical to the original adult.

Somatic cell nuclear transfer or nuclear transplantation can also be used to produce stem cells. Stem cells are unspecialized cells that can renew themselves indefinitely, and under the right conditions, develop into more mature cells with specialized functions. The production of stem cells in this manner can be accomplished in a laboratory. There has been a great deal of interest and controversy around the creation of stem cells for clinical and research purposes. There is considerable potential for developing new medical therapies to treat life-threatening diseases and advancing biomedical knowledge.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Human cloning is prohibited, as is assisting in, or attempting human cloning. A civil penalty of up to \$100,000 can be imposed for each violation. The Attorney General may bring an action to enforce this prohibition.

Human cloning is defined as human asexual reproduction, accomplished by introducing nuclear material from one or more human somatic cells into a fertilized or unfertilized oocyte whose nuclear material has been removed or inactivated so as to produce a living organism,

at any stage of development, that is genetically virtually identical to an existing or previously existing human organism.

Shipping, receiving, importing or exporting any product of human cloning is prohibited.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The word "prohibiting" is added to the title. "Human cloning" is substituted for "cloning of a human being" and the definition is revised. The definition of "oocyte" is corrected and a prohibition against shipping, receiving, importing or exporting any product of human cloning is added.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Allowing cloning of a human being threatens the dignity of human life and places individuals at risk.

Testimony Against: Although banning human cloning, this bill does not go far enough to ban cloning which would destroy human life. Embryonic stem cell research should not be allowed. There is no real therapeutic value for conducting such research. This bill still creates a health risk for women and treats human life as a commodity.

Testified: Senator Rosa Franklin, prime sponsor (pro); Sharon Quick M.D., Bonney Lake, WA (con); Bob Higley, Washington Evangelicals for Responsible Government (con); Kevin Glackin-Coley, Washington State Catholic Conference (con).