

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



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March 1, 2016

The Honorable Marsha Blackburn
Chair, Select Investigative Panel of the
Committee on Energy and
Commerce

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Janice Schakowsky
Ranking Member, Select Investigative
Panel of the Committee on Energy
and Commerce

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Blackburn and Schakowsky:

On behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), a non-profit professional organization of 64,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical sub-specialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults, I write express support for necessary medical research conducted using fetal tissue.

In the last century, medical research has led to numerous scientific advances that have drastically improved the lives of children. Perhaps none of these advances have been more impactful than the development of vaccines. It is estimated that for just the children born between 1994 and 2013, "vaccination will prevent an estimated 322 million illnesses, 21 million hospitalizations, and 732,000 deaths over the course of their lifetimes." Chicken pox, hepatitis A, polio, rabies, and rubella vaccines are grown in human cell cultures developed from two cell lines that were derived from fetal tissue in the 1960s. Fetal tissue research has played an integral role in the vaccine development that has saved millions of lives throughout history.

Fetal tissue can help researchers replicate human systems that cannot otherwise be replicated. This type of research has helped improve our understanding of numerous health issues including early brain development, neurocognitive disorders, congenital heart defects, Down syndrome, and other infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and influenza. As with any research, fetal tissue research must be conducted consistent with appropriate ethical standards. Given the substantial historical and future potential benefit on child health, the AAP strongly supports continued federal funding for fetal tissue research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Benard P. Dreyer".

Benard P. Dreyer, MD, FAAP
President

BPD/jdb