

**Opening Statement of Ranking Member Jan Schakowsky**  
Select Investigative Panel  
Hearing on “Bioethics and Fetal Tissue”  
Wednesday, March 2, 1016

Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to make two key points.

First, fetal tissue research has saved millions of lives and has the potential to save millions more. That is why many Republicans have long supported – and should continue to support – the use of fetal tissue for research purposes.

Second, today’s hearing is not part of a serious investigation into fetal tissue research or anything else. Twelve states, three congressional committees, and a grand jury in Texas have already investigated and found no evidence that Planned Parenthood is seeking to profit from the sale of fetal tissue. Indeed, the only criminal acts uncovered in the course of these investigations have been those of anti-abortion extremist David Daleiden, who is now under indictment in Texas for his role in manufacturing the deceptively-edited videos that have fueled the Republicans’ latest attack on women and their doctors.

Faced with these facts, the Select Panel should have disbanded. Instead, the Chair has embarked on a partisan and dangerous witch hunt. Her actions are putting the privacy and safety of Americans at risk.

Over the repeated objection of the Democratic Members of the Panel, the Chair has sent dozens of document requests to academic institutions, medical schools, and healthcare providers across the country. She has already issued three unilateral subpoenas demanding the names of individual researchers, graduate students, medical students, doctors, and clinic personnel – and is threatening to issue more.

There are no rules in place to protect these names from public disclosure. In fact, the Chair’s staff has made it perfectly clear that any name turned over to the Panel may be released to the public.

There is no reason to create such a database, and the Chair’s abuse of her position as Chair to compel this information is reminiscent of Senator Joe McCarthy’s abusive tactics.

We live in a world where researchers who use fetal tissue are compared to Nazi war criminals and extremists have tried to burn clinics to the ground. We live in a world where women have to face a gauntlet of harassment to get healthcare and where there are threatening websites that identify reproductive healthcare providers, their families, and the locations of their clinics and homes.

On the day after Thanksgiving, a gunman drove sixty miles to a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs, killed three people, injured nine others, and terrorized doctors and patients. When arrested, he uttered the words “no more baby parts” – a phrase that many of my

Republican colleagues have invoked both before – and after – these murders and in connection with this Panel’s investigation.

Linking individual’s names to an investigation that the Republicans describe as examining the “harvesting” of “baby body parts” and the “horrific” practices of abortion providers puts people in danger. Our words and our actions matter.

The Chair has refused to explain why she needs a database of names. As the Washington Post editorial board asked just a few weeks ago – *“How is the name of a graduate student who five years ago was an intern at a lab relevant to anything.”*

There is no apparent reason for this, other than harassment and intimidation. Republicans may not like the fact that abortion is legal – and therefore safe – for women in this country. But that is no excuse for putting students, researchers, women, and their doctors at risk.

The Democratic Members of the Committee have repeatedly asked the Chair to stop demanding this information. We have proposed reasonable rules that would prevent collection of certain information and otherwise protect the information that we do receive. So far, the Chair has ignored our requests.

Nonetheless – and I want to make this very clear to the entities that are under threat of subpoena or contempt from the Chair and to every researcher, doctor, and woman in America – Democrats will continue to fight to keep them safe.

The unfortunate truth is that this partisan pursuit of the manufactured, false allegations of anti-abortion extremists is putting Americans in harm’s way, and it must stop. It is time to turn our attention to ensuring – not attacking – critical medical research and women’s access to healthcare.

With that, I request unanimous consent to enter into the record the February 21, 2016 Washington Post editorial – “The Planned Parenthood witch hunt” – and yield back the balance of my time.