

THE COMMISSION TO PROMOTE A NATIONAL DIA-  
LOGUE ON BIOETHICS ESTABLISHMENT ACT OF  
1998

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, In recent years, I have often voiced concern that medical technology is moving at an unprecedented pace, leaving the rest of society ill-prepared to cope with the increasingly complex moral and ethical dilemmas that follow in the wake of new inventions. We must never attempt to divorce scientific progress from ethical considerations. We must instead fashion timely answers to the timeless question "Is there a line that should not be crossed even for scientific or other gain, and if so, where is it?" (Washington Post editorial, Oct. 2, 1994)

The recent furor over Dolly the cloned sheep, and Dr. Seed's subsequent announcement that he intended to clone a human being through the same technique, has highlighted the necessity of an independent, balanced forum to address the ethical implications of new technological capabilities. Two temptations threaten both science and ethics in the current milieu. There is pressure on legislators (often unfamiliar with scientific issues) to rush to draft laws that could hamper important research efforts. There is a parallel tendency on the part of academic scientists to resist any input from law or ethics into their research. Thus, science and ethics are lost in the political morass, while the public often remains uninvolved and frightened. The example of the cloning debate provides ample evidence of this tendency.

There are no fewer than six legislative proposals to address cloning on the horizon, ranging from sweeping prohibitions to largely symbolic bans. The National Bioethics Advisory Commission (a commission appointed entirely by President Clinton) did a good job of trying to assimilate the information on cloning under their ninety day deadline last year, but they were unable to substantively address the ethical issues surrounding human cloning. The Commission cited inadequate time to tackle difficult ethical issues in the context of our pluralistic society, and primarily focused on scientific concerns as well as the less abstract issue of safety. They then appealed to each American citizen to step to the plate and exercise moral leadership in forming a national policy on human cloning.

In an effort to follow up on the Commission's recommendations, the Senate labor Committee's Subcommittee on Public Health and Safety, which I chair, held a hearing June 17, 1997, entitled "Ethics and Theology: A Continuation of the National Discussion on Human Cloning." We heard testimony on all sides of the issue, from the Christian, Islamic, and Jewish traditions, and from philosophers well-schooled in biomedical ethics. We launched a broader public debate with questions about the nature of human individuality, family, and social structure.

However, time has shown that both a Presidential Commission, and the United States Congress are inadequate and inappropriate forums for bioethical issues of intricacy and importance. I am therefore proposing to establish a new independent National Bioethics Commission, representative of the public at large, with combined participation of experts in law, science, theology, medicine, social science, and philosophy/ethics with interested members of the public.

It is my hope that this Commission will forge a new path for our country in the field of bioethics. That they will enable us to have an informed, thoughtful, scientific debate in the public square without fear or politics driving our decisions. The Majority and Minority Leaders of Congress would appoint members of the panel, but no current Member of Congress or Administration political appointee would be allowed to participate during their term of office. We simply must depoliticize these discussions while simultaneously broadening input from the general public. Each and every citizen should have the opportunity to contribute to these great debates.

I anticipate that some may question the role of theology in a public policy debate. Certainly the President's advisory commission found that their considerations were incomplete without examining the religious mores of our culture. Our founding fathers also recognized that public policy could not be formulated in a theological vacuum. While they forbade the establishment of a state religion, they simultaneously affirmed the rights of God-fearing people to make their voices heard in the public arena. Today, and throughout history, religion has been a primary source of the beliefs governing these decisions for men and women of all races and creeds.

So it is vital that our public debate and reflection on scientific developments keep pace, and even anticipate and prepare for new scientific knowledge. The moral and ethical dilemmas inherent in the cloning of human beings may well be our greatest test to date. We do not simply seek knowledge, but the wisdom to apply that knowledge. As with each of the mind boggling scientific advances of the last century, we know that there is the potential for both good and evil in this technology. Our task as legislators is to define the role of the federal government in harnessing this technology for good. Our task as citizens is to exercise responsible stewardship of the precious gift of life. May this Commission enable us to fulfill our trust.

#### ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 10

At the request of Mr. BURNS, his name was withdrawn as a cosponsor of S. 10, a bill to reduce violent juvenile crime, promote accountability by juvenile criminals, punish and deter violent gang crime, and for other purposes.

S. 260

At the request of Mr. ABRAHAM, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. HELMS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 260, A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act with respect to penalties for crimes involving cocaine, and for other purposes.

S. 261

At the request of Mr. DOMENICI, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. JEFFORDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 261, a bill to provide for a biennial budget process and a biennial appropriations process and to enhance oversight and the performance of the Federal Government.

S. 348

At the request of Mr. MCCONNELL, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 348, a bill to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to encourage States to enact a Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights, to provide standards and protection for the conduct of internal police investigations, and for other purposes.

S. 412

At the request of Mr. LAUTENBERG, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 412, A bill to provide for a national standard to prohibit the operation of motor vehicles by intoxicated individuals.

S. 497

At the request of Mr. COVERDELL, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 497, a bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act and the Railway Labor Act to repeal the provisions of the Acts that require employees to pay union dues or fees as a condition of employment.

S. 836

At the request of Mr. ABRAHAM, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. DEWINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 836, a bill to offer small businesses certain protections from litigation excesses.

S. 837

At the request of Mr. CAMPBELL, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 837, a bill to exempt qualified current and former law enforcement officers from State laws prohibiting the carrying of concealed firearms and to allow States to enter into compacts to recognize other States' concealed weapons permits.

S. 887

At the request of Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN, the names of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. FORD) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. FAIRCLOTH) were added as cosponsors of S. 887, a bill to establish in the National Service the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom program, and for other purposes.

S. 1069

At the request of Mr. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Delaware

(Mr. ROTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1069, a bill entitled the "National Discovery Trails Act of 1997."

S. 1096

At the request of Mr. KERREY, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1096, a bill to restructure the Internal Revenue Service, and for other purposes.

S. 1119

At the request of Mr. ABRAHAM, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. COVERDELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1119, a bill to amend the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act, 1930 to increase the penalty under certain circumstances for commission merchants, dealers, or brokers who misrepresent the country of origin or other characteristics of perishable agricultural commodities.

S. 1215

At the request of Mr. ASHCROFT, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1215, a bill to prohibit spending Federal education funds on national testing.

S. 1251

At the request of Mr. BREAUX, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. WELLSTONE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1251, A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the amount of private activity bonds which may be issued in each State, and to index such amount for inflation.

S. 1255

At the request of Mr. COATS, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. ABRAHAM), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. DEWINE), and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. LUGAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 1255, a bill to provide for the establishment of demonstration projects designed to determine the social, civic, psychological, and economic effects of providing to individuals and families with limited means an opportunity to accumulate assets, and to determine the extent to which an asset-based policy may be used to enable individuals and families with limited means to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

S. 1297

At the request of Mr. COVERDELL, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1297, a bill to redesignate Washington National Airport as "Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport."

S. 1308

At the request of Mr. BREAUX, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. NICKLES) and the Senator from Nevada (Mr. BRYAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1308, A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure taxpayer confidence in the fairness and independence of the taxpayer problem resolution process by providing a more independently operated Office of the Taxpayer Advocate, and for other purposes.

S. 1334

At the request of Mr. BOND, the names of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. FORD), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. MURKOWSKI), and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) were added as cosponsors of S. 1334, A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to establish a demonstration project to evaluate the feasibility of using the Federal Employees Health Benefits program to ensure the availability of adequate health care for Medicare-eligible beneficiaries under the military health care system.

S. 1360

At the request of Mr. ABRAHAM, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. DEWINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1360, A bill to amend the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 to clarify and improve the requirements for the development of an automated entry-exit control system, to enhance land border control and enforcement, and for other purposes.

S. 1413

At the request of Mr. LUGAR, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1413, A bill to provide a framework for consideration by the legislative and executive branches of unilateral economic sanctions.

S. 1461

At the request of Mr. LAUTENBERG, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. BREAUX) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1461, A bill to establish a youth mentoring program.

S. 1573

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) and the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1573, A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to increase the Federal minimum wage.

S. 1577

At the request of Mr. CHAFEE, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. HELMS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1577, A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide additional tax relief to families to increase the affordability of child care, and for other purposes.

S. 1589

At the request of Mr. HUTCHINSON, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. GRAMS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1589, A bill to provide dollars to the classroom.

#### SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 30

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. JEFFORDS), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. HOLLINGS), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. KEMPTHORNE), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. FORD), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. DEWINE), the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE), the Senator from Illinois (Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN), the Senator from

South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON), and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. MURKOWSKI) were added as cosponsors of Senate Joint Resolution 30, A joint resolution designating March 1, 1998 as "United States Navy Asiatic Fleet Memorial Day", and for other purposes.

#### SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 55

At the request of Mr. GREGG, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. FRIST), the Senator from New York (Mr. MOYNIHAN), and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) were added as cosponsors of Senate Concurrent Resolution 55, A concurrent resolution declaring the annual memorial service sponsored by the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Service Board of Directors to honor emergency medical services personnel to be the "National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Service."

#### SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 71

At the request of Mr. LOTT, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. BURNS) was added as a cosponsor of Senate Concurrent Resolution 71, A concurrent resolution condemning Iraq's threat to international peace and security.

#### SENATE RESOLUTION 155

At the request of Mr. LOTT, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. ABRAHAM), the Senator from Illinois (Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN), and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CLELAND) were added as cosponsors of Senate Resolution 155, A resolution designating April 6 of each year as "National Tartan Day" to recognize the outstanding achievements and contributions made by Scottish Americans to the United States.

#### SENATE RESOLUTION 168

At the request of Mr. HUTCHINSON, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. GRAMS) was added as a cosponsor of Senate Resolution 168, A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the Department of Education, States, and local educational agencies should spend a greater percentage of Federal education tax dollars in our children's classrooms.

#### SENATE RESOLUTION 171—DESIGNATING "GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY: A NATIONAL DAY OF CELEBRATION OF GREEK AND AMERICAN DEMOCRACY"

Mr. SPECTER submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 171

Whereas the ancient Greeks developed the concept of democracy, in which the supreme power to govern was invested in the people;

Whereas the Founding Fathers of the United States of America drew heavily upon the political experience and philosophy of ancient Greece in forming our representative democracy;

Whereas the founders of the modern Greek state modeled their government after that of the United States in an effort to best imitate their ancient democracy;