



NATIONAL BIOETHICS ADVISORY COMMISSION

March 16, 2001

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Executive Director

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On June 9, 1997, the National Bioethics Advisory Commission submitted a report to President Clinton on *Cloning Human Beings*. The President had requested this report on February 24, 1997, immediately after scientists in Scotland revealed that they had for the first time succeeded in cloning an adult mammal. At the time, it was widely agreed that this technology might enable valuable medical and scientific developments, but its direct application to human beings would raise serious ethical issues.

While we did not resolve all of those issues, we unanimously concluded that given the current state of the science, any attempt to create a human being through somatic cell nuclear transfer would be terribly premature and unacceptably dangerous. Besides being morally unacceptable on safety grounds, the creation of human clones would involve risks to the children—and more broadly to society—that are serious enough to merit further reflection and deliberation before this line of research goes forward.

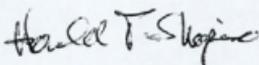
The Commission therefore recommended that the existing moratorium on federal funding of any attempt to clone a human being should be extended to all such experiments, however funded. Although bills were introduced in the 105th and 106th Congresses to prohibit human cloning, no legislation was enacted. The Commission has nonetheless continued to monitor scientific developments and ethical discourse in this field.

Over the past three years, various people have announced the intention to undertake human cloning through somatic cell nuclear transfer, even though the leading scientists carrying out basic research in this field remain firmly of the view that it would be unduly risky to attempt to clone a human being—indeed, that current research with other mammals makes clear that any such attempt would produce many horrible outcomes not only for the children but probably also for their mothers.

While it is difficult to evaluate the credibility of announced plans for human cloning, they must be taken seriously, especially when they involve researchers who have previously performed other advanced forms of reproductive medicine.

We hope that you share our conclusion that no research to create a human being through cloning should take place in the United States at this time. Adopting such a prohibition would bring us into line with the position adopted by the Council of Europe and encourage other nations to do likewise, so that this problem can be dealt with effectively at an international, cooperative level, as recommended by the G-8 nations at the Denver Summit. We urge you to support—and to take the lead in seeking—legislation that would impose a moratorium on the use of somatic cell nuclear transfer to create human beings.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Harold T. Shapiro".

Harold T. Shapiro
Chair