



# Special Reports

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## CHALLENGING LIES, SPREADING TRUTH

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Guest newspaper columns and “letters to the editor” are excellent tools for bringing the pro-life message to people. This is especially true when done in response to the editorial opinion of the newspaper staff or a letter sent in by a pro-abortion person.

The following guest commentary (presented first) and “letter to the editor” (presented second) were published in the Rockford (Illinois) *Register Star*. They are among the best we have read, in both style and substance. We believe they are great educational tools and example of logical and reasoned thought.

In addressing the moral question of whether or not cloning is permissible, the editorial board of the *Register Star* arrived at the correct conclusion albeit for the wrong reasons. While recognizing that “[s]ome things are just inherently, intrinsically wrong...” and that cloning “should be banned,” the board appears to have based its opposition to cloning on the potential for “genetic problems” rather than on the fact that cloning violates the inherent dignity and inviolability of human life. Opposition to such research must be based on the established scientific and moral certainty of the humanity of the embryo, not on pragmatic concerns.

Whether human life is created by what the editorial board terms the “usual way” (fertilization) or by somatic cell nuclear transfer (cloning), the resulting human embryo is a new, distinct human being. This is scientific fact not religious dogma to be debated. Every notable human embryology textbook recognizes this fact. While none of us were ever a sperm or oocyte, all of us were zygotes, embryos, and fetuses. All of us were infants, toddlers, and adolescents. Sperm and ova are not human beings. Zygotes, embryos, fetuses, infants, toddlers, and adolescents are. All human life is a continuum and

no one is more or less human at any stage of development. Human life must be respected and protected at all its stages. Not to do so puts all of humanity at risk.

Yes, “copying humans is horrible.” Experimenting on embryos for hypothetical benefits to those suffering from disease is horrible. Destroying human beings by abortion is horrible. Any deliberate attack on innocent human life is horrible.

Unlike the supposition put forth by the board that some intrinsically wrong actions are “on a level most of us will never be able to comprehend,” I contend that most people will understand why cloning (as well as embryonic stem cell research and abortion) is intrinsically wrong if they are presented with the facts rather than the distortions and disinformation typically parlayed by those who want to justify genetic tinkering and so-called reproductive rights.

The editorial board writes that “a world that doesn’t know where to draw the line” is scarier than “a world with fatal illnesses.” I agree. Scarier yet is a world that does not respect and protect *all* human life—a world that decides that some human beings are more valuable than others and a world that supports the killing of the most vulnerable among us.

The editorial board of the *Rockford Register Star* opposes human cloning while supporting the idea that the pre-born have no right to life if their mothers choose to abort them. They oppose human cloning while supporting the horrific destruction of viable fetuses through dilatation and extraction (commonly known as partial birth abortion). They

oppose the creation of life by cloning but not the destruction of embryonic or fetal life.

The board recognizes the need to “draw a line” and yet it draws that line irrationally. The only logical place to “draw the line” is at the point before the dignity of human life is threatened; before human life is viewed as property; before we treat humans as guinea pigs; and before we are allowed to decide who lives and who dies. If the line is drawn at any other point, all of us will be at the mercy of the subjective, inconsistent opinions of others on whether we live or die. We either protect *all* human life or no one is safe.

Yes, there are some things that are intrinsically and inherently wrong. Using human beings as research material is wrong. Cloning is wrong. Embryonic stem cell research is wrong. Abortion is wrong. Racism is wrong. Anything that violates the dignity of humankind is wrong.

### **Readers Deserve to Know the Truth**

“‘Abortion on demand.’ It’s such a popular phrase, you’d never know it isn’t true.” This shrewd proclamation by the *Register Star* editorial board serves to perpetuate a myth, not convey the truth.

Abortion-on-demand is defined as abortion solely at a woman’s request. *Roe v Wade* allowed states to place limits on abortion after the second trimester except in cases of the mother’s health. *Doe v Bolton* (also handed down by the Supreme Court on January 22, 1973) defined health so broadly as to include “all factors—physical, emotional, psychological, familial and the woman’s age—relevant to the well being of the patient.” As a result of these two decisions, we *do* have abortion on demand in this country through all nine months of pregnancy. Granted, it is not always easy to find an abortionist who will commit late third trimester abortions, but the network of abortion providers will find one if a woman requests it.

Current law does not prohibit a woman from procuring an abortion. In 1992, in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, the Supreme Court gave states the right to enact certain restrictions on abortion as long as they do not create an “undue burden” for

women seeking abortion. If one were to believe what the *Register Star* portrays as truth, one would think that the State of Wisconsin places undue burdens on women. Most women, however, would disagree.

The exaggerations listed by the editorial board in reference to the Wisconsin law are absurd. Yes, Wisconsin has parental and informed consent laws, as well as a 24-hour waiting period, but abortionists do not have to “recite a 20-minute list of risks and alternatives to abortion.” It would seem prudent for the board to actually read the *1995 Wisconsin Act 309* for the facts rather than relying on abortion rights rhetoric.

The Wisconsin law states that “many women now seek or are encouraged to undergo elective abortions without full knowledge of the medical and psychological risks of abortion, development of the unborn child or of alternatives to abortion” and that “a reasonable waiting period is critical to ensure that a woman has the fullest opportunity to give her voluntary and informed consent before she elects to undergo an abortion.” What logical objection could individuals who call themselves pro-choice have to laws that are designed to help women in making a voluntary and informed decision?

“Flipping through a 26-page color booklet that shows the development of the fetus at two-week intervals” is considered *harassment* by the editorial board. Surely, they are not concerned that when most women see what their unborn child actually looks like, they reject abortion.

Women seeking abortion in Wisconsin must be told that they may be eligible for funds for prenatal care, childbirth, and neonatal care. They must also be told that the father of the child is liable for the baby’s financial support. On what rational basis could someone object to this?

The editorial board properly laments that in this country we have “not yet reached the point where abortions are rare.” Interestingly, Wisconsin is experiencing a steep decline in the number of abortions. In 1980 there were 21,754 abortions. In 2001 the number had dropped to 10,925. While there are a number of reasons for the decline, one

cannot deny the influence of true informed consent. When women are offered practical assistance, become fully aware of the developmental stage of their unborn child, and are not rushed into a decision, they are more likely to choose life for their babies.

The board writes that it has an obligation to speak out “as a matter of conscience.” In the future, one would hope that truth would be instrumental in forming that conscience and that even when opining, factual information be obligatory.

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