

The Association of Politically Active Christians

Three Admiral Street
Albany, New York 12205
www.apacny.net

2010 MEMORANDUM OF OPPOSITION S.4531/A.2761 (ADVANCED DIRECTIVES FOR DISPOSITION OF HUMAN GAMETES AND EMBRYOS)

Contact: Stephen P. Hayford (518-364-5324)

APAC opposes Bill S.4531/A.2761, which would require the use of advanced directives regarding the disposition of cryopreserved (frozen) human gametes and embryos.

While APAC does not object to the provisions of this bill relating to cryopreserved gametes, APAC strongly objects to the provisions relating to human embryos. The proposed legislation sidesteps significant ethical concerns about the appropriate treatment of human embryos. Human embryos are living human beings, and deserve to be treated with the same dignity and respect with which all human life should be treated—regardless of that human being’s size or stage of development.

Under this proposed legislation, every person who places a human embryo into a cryopreserved state must set forth advanced directives regarding how that embryo should be disposed of in various situations. The proposed legislation would require that a form be completed and executed by the embryo’s parent or parents; the form would include various options for the treatment of human embryos, including thawing embryos “with no further action” (thus ending their lives) and donating embryos for scientific research purposes (also ending their lives). The situations contemplated by the advanced directives include the death of the parent, a marital separation or divorce, a parent’s decision not to further pursue assisted reproduction, and a parent’s “failure to pay storage fees” to the entity having custody of the embryos. The very idea of a human embryo’s life being ended simply because of a bill payment issue underscores the callous and repugnant nature of this entire proposal.

While APAC is opposed to *in vitro* fertilization and to the cryopreservation of human embryos in the first instance, it is vitally important that the State of New York refrain from encouraging New Yorkers from disposing of cryopreserved embryos as if they were waste products or goods sold in commerce. If an advanced directives bill is passed, these two options should not be included. Instead, the State should—at the very least—mandate that cryopreserved embryos be donated for embryo adoption if the parents of that embryo no longer want it. Furthermore, the legislation ought to explicitly provide conscience protections for individuals and organizations that have custody of cryopreserved embryos, but have moral objections to advanced directives that would require them to end the life of a human embryo.

In Psalm 82:3, Christian believers are instructed as follows: “Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.” As a Christian organization, APAC is compelled to speak on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves, and to defend the defenseless. APAC respectfully urges Members of the New York State Legislature to adhere to this important principle by opposing Bill S.4531/A.2761.