

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 16, 2019

The Honorable Alex Azar
United States Secretary of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington D.C., 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

Thank you for the announcement of June 5, 2019, that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) was changing its policy on funding for research that uses human fetal tissue from elective abortions. In addition to canceling a major contract with the University of California San Francisco and ending intramural research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) using fetal tissue, HHS announced that new NIH applications for extramural research using fetal tissue would be subject to congressionally-authorized review by an ethics review board. We are grateful that HHS further clarified its guidelines for extramural research through a July notification. All these changes were welcome news; using taxpayer funding to exploit the bodies of aborted babies for research is a repulsive practice. We appreciate your commitment to promoting the dignity of human life.

HHS has communicated that the announcement regarding NIH extramural research, meaning outside researchers receiving funding, only applies to new applications. It does not apply to grants that are mid-cycle, although these projects will have to apply to the ethics advisory board to be renewed. While this significant achievement is good news, we are disappointed that 200 projects using fetal tissue research currently continue. According to its categorical spending table, NIH plans to spend \$120 million on these projects in FY19.

A recent op-ed published in the *Washington Examiner* also highlighted that these experiments with the body parts of aborted babies often involve cruel tests on animal subjects. For instance, according to the op-ed, these experiments involves “transplant[ing] intestines removed from 18-24 week-old aborted fetuses onto the backs of 6 to 8-week-old mice,” “implanting thymus glands from aborted human babies into mice” and implanting “intact reproductive tracts from 9.5 to 22-week-old human fetuses, including from a pair of aborted twins, into mice dosed with synthetic estrogen.”^[1] In addition to the appalling exploitation of aborted babies, many have expressed concern that experiments also fail to treat animal subjects humanely.

We ask you to provide further information about these mid-cycle projects using fetal tissue:

^[1] Hackbarth, Alyssa Canobbio & Terrisa Bukovinic. “Defund Grotesque Taxpayer-funded Human Fetal Tissue Experiments on Lab Animals.” *Washington Examiner*, August 20, 2019:

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/op-cds/defund-grotesque-taxpayer-funded-human-fetal-tissue-experiments-on-lab-animals>

- *Questions of scope:*
 - Please provide a list of currently funded grants using human fetal tissue that includes the end date and renewal date for each grant.
 - For each project, please identify how many fetal livers, thymus, and other body parts are used, the cost per body part, and the total cost of fetal tissue. Please indicate how many different babies were used in each project and the gestational age of each baby. Please provide a total number of babies used for all mid-cycle projects.
 - For each currently-funded grant, please indicate the grants that use animal testing. Please provide a list of the projects, including titles, animal species, number of each species used, proposed human fetal tissue uses, research objectives, locations, grant numbers, start/end dates and budgets.


- *Ethics advisory board:*
 - NIH has indicated that an ethics advisory board will be convened to review applications for research involving human fetal tissue. Has NIH had reason to convene the board? If so, please list the grants being considered by the board.

- *Violations of federal laws and policies governing human fetal tissue research:*
 - We understand the basis of the federal funding policy change is grounded on the ethics of the research, and want to thank you again for these welcome changes. In addition, the *Public Health Service Act* outlines conditions under which taxpayer-funded human fetal tissue research may be conducted. Please describe any violations of relevant laws, policies and guidelines by taxpayer-funded researchers over the last 5 years.

- *Annual reports:*
 - The *Public Health Service Act*, section 498A, states that the Secretary of HHS shall provide Congress yearly with a report describing human fetal tissue research carried out during the preceding fiscal year, including a description of whether the research has been conducted according to this section, i.e., on the transplantation of human fetal tissue for therapeutic purposes. Please provide copies of all reports submitted to Congress since FY14.
 - If this data is not included in each report, please provide yearly estimates of the numbers and types of fetal tissues and body parts used, and numbers of babies who donated body parts used in the reported experiments.

We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



 Matt Gaetz
 Member of Congress



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 Member of Congress

Ralph Abraham, M.D.
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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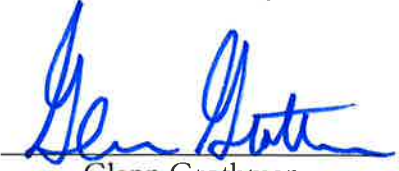
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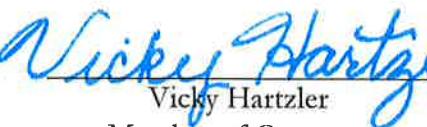
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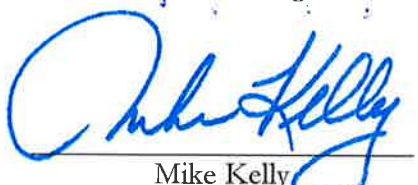
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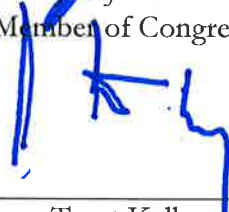
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John Joyce, M.D.
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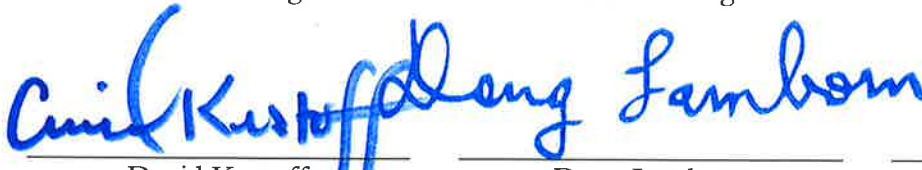
Mike Kelly
Member of Congress



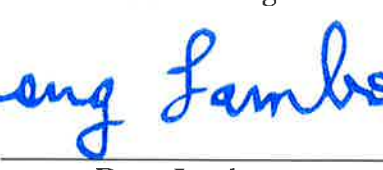
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