



Pro-Life Groups Back Congressional Bill to Ban Human-Animal Hybrid Clones

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Washington, DC (LifeNews.com) -- Pro-life groups are backing a new Congressional bill that would ban the creation of hybrid clones with both human and animal parts. Rep. Chris Smith introduced the bill last week in the House of Representatives at a time when British lawmakers are considering allowing the practice.

The measure is the Human-Animal Hybrid Prohibition Act (H.R. 5910) and Senator Sam Brownback introduced the Senate companion bill last fall.

Several pro-life groups have already pledged to support the bill because the creation of the clones will involve the destruction of human life.

They also oppose manipulating human and animal DNA to create hybrids.

Cardinal Justin Rigali, chairman of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' committee on pro-life activities, welcomed the legislation as "an opportunity to rein in an egregious and disturbing misuse of technology to undermine human dignity."

He told LifeNews.com the legislation "offers an opportunity to rein in an egregious and disturbing misuse of technology to undermine human dignity."

Though some may regard hybrid cloning as nothing more than science fiction, Cardinal Rigali said the threat is real.

"The United Kingdom is preparing to authorize the production of cloned human embryos using human DNA and animal eggs, setting the stage for the creation of embryos that are half-human and half-animal," he said.

"Researchers in New York have boasted of implanting 'mouse/human embryonic chimeras' into female mice, and California scientists say they may produce a mouse whose brain is entirely made up of human brain cells," he added.

"The alleged promise of embryonic stem cells has already been used in attempts to justify destroying human embryos, and even to justify creating them solely for destructive research," he explained. "Now, the same utilitarian argument is being used to justify an especially troubling form of genetic manipulation, to create partly human creatures as mere objects for research or commercial use."

In January, Brownback had choice words for the British researchers wanting to make hybrid clones.

"We need to ensure that experimentation and subsequent ramifications do not outpace ethical discussion and societal decisions," he said.

"The UK's decision to allow the creation of human-animal hybrids is short-sighted, and further underscores our need here at home to enact" the ban, he added.

Mary Landrieu, a Louisiana Democrat, is the co-sponsor of the Senate version. She said the British government has created a line the United States shouldn't cross.

"Here in the United States, we simply cannot open the door to the unethical blending of humans and animals, which the British government seems intent on doing," Sen. Landrieu said.

"This unsound science also presents potential global health hazards due to increased risk of disease spreading to humans from animals," she added.

Landrieu said she and Brownback would renew their push for a human cloning ban in the United States, though the Democrat-controlled Senate has yet to take it up for a debate and vote.

Their bill prohibits human somatic cell nuclear transfer, the process by which a human clone is created but does not affect the legality of adult or embryonic stem cell research.

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