

MISSOURIANS DECEIVED ON CLONING INITIATIVE

On November 7, Missouri voters amended their state constitution to protect all forms of stem cell research that are legal under federal law. The Missouri Stem Cell Research and Cures Initiative, Amendment 2, passed by the slimmest of majorities, with 51 percent of Missouri voters favoring it. What triggered a big debate was whether human cloning would be allowed or prohibited under this measure. Many voters were confused on this point, with proponents of the initiative presenting misleading information. Such practices are, unfortunately, not unheard of.

When whites were given a literacy test as a requisite for voting in parts of the South 50 years ago, they were asked such questions as, "Who was the first president of the U.S.?" By contrast, blacks were asked to cite verbatim the Preamble to the Constitution. We had the same kind of vile trickery played in the 21st century, only this time the victims were the voters in Missouri: stealth and wealth corrupted the democratic process.

The 100-word initiative on stem cell research in Missouri was not merely a summary of a 2,000-word statement—it collapsed the truth along with the verbiage. The initiative says that "No person may clone or attempt to clone a human being." But when the fine print is read, it actually allows for therapeutic cloning.

What therapeutic cloning does is to create a human embryo for the purpose of extracting stem cells, and in doing so it kills the embryo. However, in Missouri the conversation was not about therapeutic cloning—it was about "somatic cell nuclear transfer" (that's the Orwellian euphemism preferred by the Stowers Institute, the financial source of almost all the \$29

million spent on this stealth campaign). As bioethicist Wesley J. Smith has written, “biologically, the act of human cloning is asexual reproduction performed via somatic cell nuclear transfer, or SCNT. This act of cloning culminates in the creation of a new human embryo.”

Researcher William L. Saunders has said that SCNT, or what he calls “experimental cloning,” violates the Nuremberg Code. He is correct: Article 5 bars experiments “where there is an *a priori* reason to believe that death or disabling injury will occur...” Because SCNT deliberately creates life for the purpose of destroying and harvesting it, it violates the Nuremberg Code.

Archbishop Raymond Burke of St. Louis wasted no time in responding to the election result. He said, “The experience of the campaign is a clarion call to all Catholics and other men and women of good will to rededicate ourselves to prayer and work,” to create a culture of life in Missouri. Archbishop Burke also pointed out that the Church “had the privilege of praying and working with many individuals and groups of faith and good will to speak the truth about the intrinsic evils of human cloning and the destruction of human embryos for research enshrined in Amendment 2.”

While Archbishop Burke preaches the truth, the cloning advocates seek only deception. It’s unfortunate that Missouri voters were on the receiving end of the latest deceit. Hopefully Missourians, and people elsewhere, will now follow the archbishop’s call for respect for “the inviolable dignity of every human life, from the first moment of its existence.”