

Testimony of

The Honorable Patrick Leahy

March 19, 2003

I am pleased the Senate Judiciary Committee is considering the scientific, moral, and ethical implications of cloning. In February, the House of Representatives passed legislation that would ban cloning technology for human reproductive and therapeutic research purposes. A similar bill has been introduced in the Senate by Senators Brownback and Landrieu.

This hearing will take up a bill that was introduced by Chairman Hatch and Senator Feinstein to ban cloning technology for human reproductive purposes but not for therapeutic research purposes. I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses on this challenging question. It is important for us to hear from experts on both sides of the issue so that we can fully understand the distinction between therapeutic and reproductive cloning technology.

I have spent a great deal of time giving this complex issue the serious deliberation it deserves, especially in light of recent claims by a religious sect that it cloned an infant. I am strongly opposed to the use of cloning techniques for the purpose of creating human beings. However, I do believe there are significant distinctions between human reproductive cloning and so-called "therapeutic cloning." The latter uses recombinant DNA techniques for research that could extend and enhance the lives of patients suffering from Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, diabetes, or physically crippling injuries. I do not believe Congress should prevent this promising research.

Again, I would like to thank the witnesses for coming today. I hope and expect that today's hearing will help us better understand this complicated issue.