

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

April 13, 2021

The Honorable Xavier Becerra  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Hubert H. Humphrey Building  
200 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra,

Congratulations on your recent confirmation as Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). We write to encourage you to immediately revoke the Trump Administration's policies restricting fetal tissue use in biomedical research. Fetal tissue is an irreplaceable resource for research that has led to numerous scientific and medical advances and contributed to the development of new therapies for many devastating diseases, including COVID-19.

The previous administration's restrictions on fetal tissue research continue to threaten scientific and medical advances by blocking intramural researchers from using the material and discouraging extramural researchers from pursuing research with it. The Trump Administration's policy was politically motivated and unnecessary. The longstanding legal and ethical framework for the oversight of fetal tissue research has been in place for decades and ensures compliance with federal law and ethics rules. Furthermore, fetal tissue would be discarded if not donated for biomedical research.

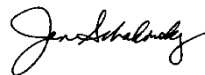
Fetal tissue is vital for advancing scientific research on human development, neurological conditions, and infectious diseases, and it is crucial for creating disease models to test new therapies quickly. This research cannot be replaced with other cell types or model systems because the unique properties of fetal tissue cannot be replicated at this time. These properties are part of the reason why fetal tissue was used to develop vaccines against polio, rubella, measles, chickenpox, adenovirus, rabies, and treatments for debilitating diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, cystic fibrosis, and hemophilia. Fetal tissue remains essential for creating models of the human immune system to study infectious diseases, including Zika, HIV, and COVID-19. It also remains crucial for ongoing clinical research for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), spinal cord injury, and Parkinson's disease.

Fetal tissue research has time and again yielded critical medical advances and can continue to do so in the future. We urge you to immediately revoke the Trump Administration restrictions on this crucial tool for biomedical research.

Sincerely,



Suzan DelBene  
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress

Jake Auchincloss  
Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Julia Brownley  
Judy Chu  
Diana DeGette  
Ted Deutch  
Bill Foster  
Jahana Hayes  
Mondaire Jones  
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Jackie Speier  
Marilyn Strickland  
Norma J. Torres  
Debbie Wasserman Schultz