

Bioethics and Public Policy: Conservative Dominance in the Current Landscape

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Overview

The rapid advance of biotechnology is quickly outpacing our ability as a society to absorb the effect it will have on our lives. Scientific and medical complexities, combined with real-life scenarios that were beyond our collective imagination a decade ago, leave many of us struggling to comprehend and evaluate the implications that these advances may have on daily life. Fundamentally, people fear change, suffering, and death—and these fears are at the heart of most bioethical issues. From embryonic stem cell research to the Terri Schiavo case, a whole new world of bioethical questions are arising. The fact that bioethics has indivisible ties to public policy adds another layer of complexity. Currently the opportunity to set the direction of public opinion is up for grabs.

To date, only extremely conservative and overtly religious groups have devoted substantial resources to affecting bioethics public policy. They, therefore, are actively driving the bioethics agenda.

This briefing memo includes an analysis of the conservative and progressive organizations that are working in the arena of bioethics and public policy, a summary of key findings, and a list of potential opportunities to influence the issues.

Bioethics Origin and Scope

Bioethics is the exploration of moral and ethical questions surrounding life, health, science, medicine, and the environment. While the roots of bioethics lie in philosophy and theology, today's bioethics requires collaboration among many additional areas of study, including law, medicine, biology, politics, sociology, history, economics, and business. The highest calling of bioethics is to be a mediator between scientific progress and societal concerns, to be the guardians of the future. Bioethical discussions involve fundamental concerns about the nature of humanity, the relationship between secularity and faith, and defining the kind of world we want to live in.

When the “God squad” formed in Seattle in the late 1960s—a group of community representatives who were charged with deciding which patients were “worthy” of receiving limited dialysis resources—bioethics focused on individual clinical decisions. Topics such as resource allocation, truth-telling to patients and families, and the protection of human subjects involved in medical research were the field's primary concerns. The explosion of technology and medicine has radically changed the nature of the issues bioethicists now face; today's issues reach far beyond simply making clinical decisions.

Bioethics in a Political Context

Analysis of the 2004 presidential election that highlighted the importance of “moral values” has become part of the general consciousness; Americans are primed to think in these terms. The recent Enron and

Tyco scandals have raised people's anxiety level about the potential for unethical behavior and corporate malfeasance by entities they thought served the public good, or were at least well regulated.

The institutions on which we have traditionally relied for guidance on difficult moral issues—whether organized religion, government, or the academy—have failed to keep pace with the science or societal implications underlying the issues. Political alliances are blurred. For example, Republican Senator Orrin Hatch, the well known pro-life conservative, came out in favor of stem cell research. In the Schiavo case, well-known opponents Jesse Jackson, Ralph Nader, and Rush Limbaugh all took the same side. The complexity and implications of bioethical issues are scrambling alliances and positions.

What's more, the media is having a difficult time figuring out how to cover bioethical issues. Should health editors cover them? Or do they belong in the technology section? Should religious columnists write about them, or are they the beat of business and political reporters? When it comes to bioethics there are few acknowledged leaders or spokespeople to whom the public can turn.

Because of this confusion, disarray, and public policy flux, the opportunity to influence the direction of public opinion is up for grabs. Essentially, whoever gets there first will frame the debate on these issues and will affect us all for decades to come.

Bioethics Becoming Mainstream

As scientific progress increases, so does our collective anxiety about that progress. We see this reflected in popular culture. While every decade since the 1950's has had its "bioethics issue" sensation, the number of issues that can be classified as "bioethics" has dramatically increased in the last five years. (See APPENDIX I.)



Once only the purview of obscure scholarly journals, now even *USA Today* is following bioethics:

A simulated newspaper clipping from USA Today. On the left is the USA Today logo, featuring a globe and the text "USA TODAY" in large white letters on a blue background, with "NO. 1 IN THE USA" in a smaller white box below. To the right of the logo, the date "Thursday, September 29, 2005" is printed in a bold, black font. Below the date is the main headline "Bioethics Hits a Crossroad" in a large, bold, black serif font. Underneath the headline is the byline "By Dan Vergano" and "USA TODAY" in a smaller black font. The main body of the article begins with the text: "Clones. Brain implants. Genetically engineered sports cheats. Members of the President's Council on Bioethics have chewed on a steady diet of science fiction favorites in the panel's first four years. In pondering technologies not expected to bear fruit for years, the council, led by American Enterprise Institute fellow Leon Kass, has defined its mission as being a search for a 'richer' bioethics, concerned with preserving human dignity amid the advance of biotechnology."

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We have also seen an increase in movie themes with bioethical issues. Recent examples include *Million Dollar Baby* (euthanasia and the right to die), *The Constant Gardener* (drug trials in developing countries), *The Island* (human clones for replacement parts), *Vera Drake* (ethics of abortion), *Gattaca* (genetic engineering), *The Sixth Day* (cloning), *Minority Report* (neuroengineering) and *Bicentennial Man* (artificial intelligence), to name a few.



Bioethics and the Shaping of Public Policy

Defining the Field

We surveyed 127 of the most influential progressive and conservative organizations including think tanks; religious, philanthropic, advocacy groups; legal and political groups; and university-based organization's websites to determine any inclusion or activity around bioethics. (Results included in APPENDIX II.)



We then selected organizations for further analysis based on the following set of criteria:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bioethical issues are a primary agenda for them ■ They have a constituency base ■ They promote an identified political agenda or set of values | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ They use a multi-issue approach
<i>(meaning the organization addresses more than one bioethics issue)</i> ■ They are based in the U.S. |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Organizations Analyzed

Conservative Organizations:

- American Bioethics Advisory Commission
(parent organization is the American Life League)
- Center for Bioethics and Culture
- Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity
- Council for Biotechnology Policy
(parent organization is the Wilberforce Forum)
- National Catholic Bioethics Center

Progressive Organizations:

- Center for Genetics and Society
- Council for Responsible Genetics
- Appignani Center for Bioethics
(parent organization is the International Humanist Ethical Union)
- Women's Bioethics Project
- World Transhumanist Association

Data on the organizations' mission, primary activities, and revenue is covered in APPENDICES III and IV.

Not included in this analysis are bioethics centers that primarily conduct research, teach, and publish, but do not promote a specific political agenda nor have a political constituency. Examples include the Center for Practical Bioethics and the Hastings Center, as well as numerous university-affiliated organizations such as bioethics centers at the University of Pennsylvania, Georgetown, Johns Hopkins, and the University of Virginia. Because no defined academic discipline or credentialing system exists for bioethics, each center is somewhat idiosyncratic in its makeup, emphasis, and philosophy. However, the academic centers are alike in attempting to present a balanced range of opinion and providing a forum for scholars from many different academic disciplines.

We've also excluded from this analysis groups that have a single-issue agenda such as to ban or promote cloning, abortion, euthanasia, stem cell research, etc. Examples include advocacy groups such as Compassion in Dying and Coalition for the Advancement of Medical Research.

Key Findings

- Conservatives have well-established bioethics centers with strong advocacy outreach programs that are interlocking and supportive of each other.
- Conservatives are using an existing infrastructure of think tank and religious organizations to drive awareness, energize their constituencies, and support a unified bioethics agenda.
- Conservative foundations are strategically funding high-profile cases with a broad bioethics agenda in mind.
- Conservatives see driving bioethical debate as critical to building a society based on their values and worldview.
- What progressive activities there are in the area of bioethics are underfunded, narrowly focused, and lacking in a unified philosophical framework.
- The progressive organizations that have added bioethics to their agenda are the reproductive rights groups that are ill-equipped to carry a broader “progressive bioethics agenda” because of their ties to the abortion debate.
- Although progressives dominate academic bioethics, the scholars are not trained and in many cases are disinclined to work from an explicit ideological framework.
- Progressives will need to do more than throw money at the problem; it will require a major rethinking of the issues.

Conservatives and Bioethics

Conservatives see bioethics as a way to extend their anti-reproductive freedom, anti-science, pro-religion political agenda. They use bioethics as a way to galvanize their base, gear up the troops for battle, divide progressives, and polish their image as protectors of society's values.

At the core of bioethics is the ultimate power struggle for the control of life (and death) and our sense of ourselves as human beings. One of the best synopses of the conservative's perspective on bioethical issues was captured by R. Atla Charo¹ in her observations of the President's Commission on Bioethics:

“...In its widespread attachment to a neo-conservative world view that is suspicious of technological advance, opposed to moral relativism and moral pluralism, determined to identify moral absolutes, and open to an increased permeation of religious values into public policy and bioethics analysis, this council and its leadership appear to reflexively endorse the view that science is a threat to both society and government...”

Conservatives Driving a Bioethical Agenda

Conservatives have not been shy or coy about their intentions to explicitly drive a bioethics agenda. In the Spring 2003 issue of *The New Atlantis* (a conservative journal on technology and society), Yuval Levin, senior research analyst at the President's Council on Bioethics and later executive director of the Council (now a member of the White House domestic policy staff), wrote in his article:



The Paradox of Conservative Bioethics

Yuval Levin

Among the more prominent peculiarities of our politics in recent years is that something called “bioethics” has become a key conservative priority...Some American conservatives have long shared the concerns that animate bioethics. The pro-life movement has always worried deeply about the treatment of the unborn by scientists and doctors, and many conservatives have through the years been interested in various issues surrounding medical ethics, illicit drug-use, assisted suicide, and other social and cultural matters that have much to do with modern science. But it was not until fairly recently that bioethics emerged as a general and prominent category of concern for the American right.

That concern has been particularly influenced by worries about what has been dubbed the “Brave New World.” This allusion to Aldous Huxley’s famous book hints at a vision of a world reshaped by biotechnology: procreation replaced by manufacture, the pursuit of happiness replaced by drugs, and human nature remade into something lower and shallower, more easily satisfied but less capable of greatness and awe. This general vision has expressed itself in specific disquiet about reproductive technologies like cloning and genetic engineering; about the transformation of human embryos into research tools and raw materials; about psychoactive drugs and assorted enhancement technologies; and about a wide array of other attempts to fundamentally reshape human life through biology and medicine. American conservatives have begun to think hard about “where biotechnology may be taking us,” as Leon Kass puts it, and what we might do about it.

The resulting intellectual and political activity has melded some of the interests of the pro-life movement with those of conservatives more concerned with the general culture and its institutions, and it has formed, through that combination, an altogether plausible conservative program. This trend, together with several sensational recent advances in biotechnology, has sent bioethics toward the top of the agenda of the American right. President Bush’s first prime-time address to the nation was about his new policy on the funding of embryonic stem cell research. Human cloning has been prominent on the congressional agenda for much of the past two years. And a substantial portion of the intellectual energy of the conservative movement has been devoted to the cause of a new bioethics...

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1. Charo, R. Alta; “SYMPOSIUM ARTICLES: Passing on the Right: Conservative Bioethics is Closer Than It Appears”; *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics* (32 J.L. Med. & Ethics 307); © 2004 American Society of Law, Medicine & Ethics; Summer, 2004

The conservative effort to drive a bioethics agenda became even more explicit as a leaked memo outlined a strategy for President Bush's second term. The memo, written by Leon Kass in February 2005, included these bold assertions:

“The purpose of this memo is to outline a bold and plausible “offensive” bioethics agenda for the second term. What we hope to achieve: new biotechnologies challenging human freedom, equality, and dignity are arriving at an accelerating pace, especially in the domains of assisted reproduction and genetic manipulation. And yet there are currently no boundaries or protections in federal law to help us confront the challenges they pose...We have today an administration and Congress as friendly to human life and human dignity as we are likely to see for many years to come...

Below is an excerpt from the reporter who broke the story:

The Washington Post

TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2005

Conservatives Draft a ‘Bioethics Agenda’ for President

By RICK WEISS
Washington Post Staff Writer

Frustrated by Congress's failure to ban human cloning or place even modest limits on human embryo research, a group of influential conservatives have drafted a broad “bioethics agenda” for President Bush's second term and have begun the delicate task of building a political coalition to support it. The loose-knit group of about a dozen people — largely spearheaded by Leon R. Kass, chairman of the President's Council on Bioethics, and Eric Cohen, editor of the *New Atlantis*, a conservative journal of technology and society — have been meeting since December. Their goal, according to a document circulating among members and others, is to devise “a bold and plausible ‘offensive’ bioethics agenda” to replace a congressional strategy that has been “too narrowly focused and insufficiently ambitious...”



RAY LUSTIG — THE WASHINGTON POST

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Conservatives weighing in on presidential bioethics issues is not new. Both the Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity and United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have been closely following and submitting reports on cloning and human stem cell research as far back as Clinton's National Advisory Commission in the late 1990's. No progressive political organizations responded to either report.

Role of Conservative Foundations

In October of 2003 the Center for Bioethics and Culture posted an article on its website entitled "Who will be the next Joe Coors of Bioethics?" Joe Coors, of the Coors Brewing Company, was the businessman who provided the initial seed money for the one of the first conservative think tanks, the very influential Heritage Foundation that was founded in 1973. The article was a plea for conservatives to step up funding of bioethical political initiatives. Consider this analysis of the funding behind the Terri Schiavo case:



The Terri Schiavo Case: Following the Money The Recorder

By Jon B. Eisenberg

March 4, 2005

Have you ever wondered who is bankrolling the seemingly endless courtroom effort to keep Terri Schiavo's feeding tube attached?

During the Watergate scandal, investigative reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein were famously advised to "follow the money." In the Schiavo case, the money leads to a consortium of conservative foundations, with \$2 billion in total assets, that are funding a legal and public relations war of attrition intended to prolong Terri's life indefinitely in order to further their own faith-based cultural agendas....

Schindler lawyer Pat Anderson "was paid directly" by the anti-abortion Life Legal Defense Foundation, which "has already spent over \$300,000 on this case," according to the foundation's Web site. Much of the support for Life Legal Defense Foundation, in turn, comes from the Alliance Defense Fund, an anti-gay rights group which collected more than \$15 million in private donations in 2002 and admits to having spent money on the Schiavo case "in the six figures," according to a recent article in the Palm Beach Post. Mediatransparency.org states that between 1994 and 2002, the Alliance Defense Fund received \$142,000 from Philanthropy Roundtable members that include the Lynde & Harry Bradley Foundation and the Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation.

Wesley Smith and Rita Marker also work for organizations that get funding from Roundtable members. Smith is a paid senior fellow with the Discovery Institute, a Seattle-based think tank that advocates the teaching of creationist "intelligent design" theory in public schools. Between 1993 and 1997, the Discovery Institute received \$175,000 from the Bradley Foundation. Marker is executive director of the International Task Force on Euthanasia, which lobbies against physician-assisted suicide. In 2001, Marker's organization received \$110,390 from the Randolph Foundation, an affiliate of the Smith Richardson family.

Roundtable members also played a role in financing the Bush v. Schiavo litigation. The Family Research Council, which uses its annual \$10 million budget to lobby for prayer in public schools and against gay marriage, filed an amicus curiae brief in Bush v. Schiavo supporting Gov. Bush, at the same time its former president, attorney Kenneth Connor, was representing the governor in that litigation. Between 1992 and 2000, the council received \$215,000 from the Bradley Foundation.

Another amicus brief backing Bush was filed by a coalition of disability rights organizations that included the National Organization on Disability and the World Institute on Disability. The former received \$810,000 between 1991 and 2002 from the Scaife Family Foundations, the Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation, and the JM Foundation; the latter received \$20,000 in 1997 from the JM Foundation....

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Traditional Think Tanks and Bioethics

While it is interesting that there are a few bioethics centers trying to push a conservative agenda, and that conservative foundations have decided to fund a few high profile cases, what is even more compelling is that well-established conservative think tanks that have traditionally focused on broad economic, social, and foreign policy issues have added “bioethics” to their political agendas. The following is a list of the key players:

The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research in Washington, D.C., (2002 revenue: \$17 million); The Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C., (2003 revenue: \$1.8 million); The Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy Studies in Washington, D.C., (2003 revenue: \$4 million); The Family Research Council in Washington, D.C. and Holland, Michigan (2003 revenue: \$9 million); James Dobson’s Focus on the Family in Colorado Springs, Colorado, (2003 revenue: \$127 million); The Discovery Institute in Seattle, Washington (2003 revenue: \$4 million)

Why are these conservative think tanks now fervently working to shape bioethics policy? They see bioethics as a way to extend their conservative agenda and they have an eager audience. When people are confused and afraid, they will seek the more conservative option. Their constituents are looking to them to provide education and counsel on these issues, and they believe that bioethical debate will be the battlefield for defining the kind of society we want to create.

The approaches these think tanks take to bioethics differ because of their target audiences. For instance, The Discovery Institute underwrites promotional book tours for conservative bioethicists and writes op-ed pieces. The American Enterprise Institute recently held a lecture for its membership on “How to think about Bioethics and the Constitution.” The Ethics and Public Policy Center (EPPC) sponsors the Biotechnology & American Democracy program, which has put a conservative spin on questions such as embryo research, abortion, and transhumanism. (The EPPC was the first organization to sponsor a conference on neuroscience and ethics in 1998, now considered one of the “hottest” fields in bioethics.) With an even broader audience, Focus on the Family posts on its website a series of mini-white papers on “How would God have us respond” to bioethical issues:

The screenshot shows a website header with the 'CITIZENLink' logo on the left and 'focus on social issues' on the right. Below the header is a navigation bar with 'FOCUS ON SOCIAL ISSUES' and a small image of a building. The main content area features the title 'Bioethics/Sanctity of Human Life' with a 'Home' link. The word 'Bioethics' is highlighted in a larger, bold font. The text below explains that bioethics is a term coined 30 years ago for examining the ethics of emerging medical technologies and biological research, and is interdisciplinary, involving medicine, law, philosophy, and public policy. It lists topics like abortion, reproductive technologies, genetic intervention, stem cell research, physician-assisted suicide, and end-of-life medical decisions. It concludes by stating that bioethics often touches us in times of illness, infertility, and unexpected medical difficulties, and is an attempt to understand the Bible's perspective on these issues.

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Home

Bioethics

“Bioethics” is a term coined nearly 30 years ago to describe the process of examining the ethics involved with emerging medical technologies and biological research. Bioethics is interdisciplinary, bringing together medicine, law, philosophy and public policy.

Bioethics covers a wide range of topics, including abortion, reproductive technologies, genetic intervention, stem cell research, physician-assisted suicide and end-of-life medical decisions.

Practically speaking, bioethics often touches us where we hurt the most: in illness, infertility and unexpected medical (and sometimes moral) difficulties. For Christians, bioethics is also an attempt to know what the Bible says about these issues and how God would have us respond.

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Regardless of the approach, what all these think tanks and centers have in common is that they are not focused on single issues; they cover an amazing breadth including end-of-life, euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, abortion, stem cell research, reproductive technologies, and genetics, to name a few. They are incredibly adept at tying these issues together in a unified conservative framework based on a concept of “human dignity.” This defines their position on any given issue and resonates with their audience.

They also coordinate their activities to add value to them. They serve on each other’s boards, speak at conferences, and develop joint promotional materials. For example, the EPPC has provided staff to the President’s Council on Bioethics and consultants to the Council also write for *The New Atlantis*. The Family Research Council developed and paid for an anti-stem cell research pamphlet and presentation used by the National Catholic Bioethics Center.

Progressive Response

The five progressive organizations analyzed are trying to get some purchase against the onslaught of conservative resources. Unfortunately, their work is severely under funded; three of the top five groups have annual incomes of less than \$150,000 and are run mostly by volunteer staff. The agendas of the two best funded organizations are narrowly focused on genetic technologies and, while they are doing important work in that area, they miss the opportunity to present a unified philosophical progressive framework. Two of the more broadly focused groups, the Women’s Bioethics Project and Appignani Center for Bioethics, were founded in the last year so it is too early to determine if their approaches will be successful.

Unlike their conservative counterparts, not one progressive think tank or neutral think tank (such as Brookings) currently has a bioethics program. One bright light is the work of the Center for American Progress (CAP). During 2005, CAP organized several talks and events related to bioethics and officially launched a bioethics project in October with a panel of academic experts on “progressive bioethics.” That panel drew an audience of 70 with representatives from healthcare groups, women’s groups, and poverty groups, who now understand that progressive bioethicists share a common goal with them. The level of interest represents a pent-up demand from progressive activists who are looking for guidance on these issues. In light of the modest effort, even more impressive was the coverage they received in the prestigious scientific journal *Nature*:

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FEATURE

US progressives fight for a voice in bioethics Left-leaning think-tank aims to influence political decisions.

Published online: 12 October 2005

[Erika Check](#)

Conservative bioethicists often provide intellectual ammunition for US politicians on major issues ranging from stem-cell research to right-to-die decisions. Now several prominent researchers are joining forces to promote different scientific values in public debate.

Arguing that conservative bioethics is out of step with most Americans, the group is forming a ‘progressive’ movement to influence discussions of scientific and medical topics. “It is important for progressive bioethics to enter the political fray,” says Arthur Caplan, an ethicist at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

On 3 October, members of the group set out key elements of their approach at a meeting at the Center for American Progress, a left-leaning think-tank in Washington DC that is helping to start the movement. They define themselves in part by what they oppose: the conservative stance embraced by Republican political leaders, by right-leaning think-tanks, and by the President’s Council on Bioethics under Leon Kass, who led the council until 1 October..

Though it is encouraging to see one program emerge, CAP has committed very little funding (about \$30,000) to developing a progressive bioethics agenda. There is no effort on behalf of progressive foundations to support the development of a progressive bioethics agenda.

Driving a Bioethical Agenda: Key Opportunities

Based on our analysis, we have identified ten potential opportunities for conservatives and progressives to exploit the current political landscape and shape public policy.

Opportunities for Conservatives

Undermine Progressive Coalitions

Conservatives have the opportunity to undermine progressive coalitions by portraying them as divided, confused, and serving special interests. They will be able to do this because many of the emerging issues bring progressive values into conflict (autonomy v. social justice, for example) and will divide potential progressive coalitions. We saw this play out in the media during the recent California Proposition 71 stem-cell initiative when progressive environmental and women's groups were battling with the scientific community over issues of corporate accountability, access to new technologies, women's health concerns, and appropriateness of using state funds to support scientific research when basic needs such as education and other social services remain under-funded. In this instance, the friction between progressives gave the conservative right additional ammunition for their anti-embryonic stem cell research position. We expect to see similar conflicts over technologies such as human genetic germline modification ("designer babies") and reproductive cloning.

Partner with progressive organizations

Conservatives also have the opportunity to partner on specific issues with organizations that are traditionally considered progressive. Examples of groups that conservatives may target to work with are feminist groups that oppose "social sex selection" (determining the sex of one's child through prenatal testing, and aborting fetuses that aren't the desired sex), disability rights groups such as Not Dead Yet that are concerned about what they see as the trend towards determining that some lives are not worthy of living (pre-implantation genetic selection technologies, support for euthanasia), and prominent environmentalists such as Bill McKibben (author of *Enough*) who have expressed concern about the excesses of science.

Exploit lack of a progressive philosophical framework

Because of their cohesive underlying theme, conservatives have the opportunity to more quickly energize and embolden their constituencies than progressive organizations. One of the conservatives' strengths is that they approach bioethical issues from a unified philosophical framework based on a concept of "human dignity" from which they derive their position on any given bioethical issue. By having a broad framework formulated from a set of agreed-upon conservative values, voters and policy makers are much more likely to "know" where they stand on any given issue and why without much in the way of educational outreach. Also, by framing the issues in terms of "human dignity"—whether the issue is genetic engineering or end-of-life termination—it taps into the intensity of the highly explosive abortion debate. Progressives, on the other hand, do not have such a framework and when they do weigh in, it is from a single-issue perspective. A few examples of this is the Coalition for the Advancement of Medical Research that supports embryonic stem cell research, or the Council for Responsible Genetics and the Center for Genetics and Society, both of which limit their scope of concern to genetics. The single-issue focus also limits the emotional intensity of the issue.

Opportunities for Progressives

Activate “non-political” bioethics professionals to political action

The American Society for Bioethics and Humanities (ASBH) is a professional society of more than 1,500 individuals, organizations, and institutions interested in bioethics and medical humanities. It does not take political positions on issues. In the past, these academics, researchers, and medical ethicists have shied away from political action. Because of the newly highly politicized nature of bioethics, many are feeling a need to get involved but don't have an easy way to participate. There is a growing sense that in the face of the kind of inequality seen regarding disparities in healthcare, ethicists have a moral obligation to do something. If this intellectual capacity could be activated on behalf of progressive bioethics, it would be difficult for the conservatives to match.

Activate progressive religious communities

Members of religious organizations that are often sympathetic to progressive causes can be activated by outreach campaigns. These groups are eager to discuss and participate in public policy initiatives on bioethical issues. By providing education and outreach tools to progressive clergy, progressives can use them to help build a constituency.

Initiate outreach to women

Progressives have an opportunity to reach out to women and build a strong constituency. Women have a special stake in bioethics because of how directly their bodies and social roles are touched by these issues; women carry babies, live longer, and predominately provide care for children, the sick, disabled, and elderly.

Build progressive coalitions beyond single-issue focus

Progressives need to organize collaboration among women's organizations, environmental groups, and other progressive groups to build a broad constituency, anticipate the issues, resolve conflicts, and weave together a set of policy positions based on a shared progressive worldview rather than weighing in on a single, special-interest focus.

Uncouple the link of bioethics from abortion

Traditionally groups that have championed women's reproductive rights, such as Planned Parenthood, have been viciously attacked by the right and have strong identities in the press and general public (both positive and negative). It is difficult for them to carry out their primary agendas and respond to emerging bioethical issues. As more progressive organizations and think tanks add bioethics to their agendas, it will help move bioethics outside of the realm of reproductive issues, where conservatives have their stronghold. Progressives are more likely to be successful setting the context of how these issues are discussed if more neutral organizations are leading the effort.

Exploit window of opportunity

There are signs of cracks in the conservatives' armor with recent political mistakes. In the Schiavo case, the majority of Americans, regardless of their position on the issue, felt it was not appropriate for the

President and Congress to be intervening in what was seen as a matter for the state courts or a private, family decision. Realizing that most Americans favor pursuing embryonic stem cell research, members of the President's Bioethics Council have tried to advance all sorts of contorted alternative ways of obtaining stem cells like genetically programming embryos to die so that their cells could then be taken.

Because of this, conservatives are beginning to fight amongst themselves about how best to push their agenda and this is temporarily undermining the coalition. As Rick Weiss wrote in his *Washington Post* article, *Conservatives Draft a 'Bioethics Agenda' for President*:

"Yet the effort to galvanize Congress has already run into a major roadblock—and not from scientists, patient advocacy groups or the biotechnology industry. In an unusual instance of open divisiveness among Bush's conservative base, the nascent agenda is under attack by a variety of opponents of embryo research, including Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.), who led failed efforts in the past four years to pass legislation that would ban the cloning of babies and human embryos for research.

The split has some conservatives on Capitol Hill worried that the new Congress's efforts to regulate these technologies could get bogged down in factional fighting even as several states take steps to mimic California's recent decision to expand human embryo research.

"We'd like to have everybody on the same page," said David Prentice, a senior fellow for life sciences at the conservative Family Research Council. "But people have different ideas of how to do that and what the page should be."

Create a bioethics philosophical framework

Challenging the conservatives' domination of the bioethics public policy agenda won't be easy, and progressives are unlikely to match their megaphone. Progressives won't be effective by merely dismissing conservatives' concerns as scientifically ignorant or faith-based nonsense. It is more than just saying "yes" where the conservatives say "no." Progressives need to create a compelling alternative vision, one based on a different worldview and values. It is not too late to frame those issues and ensure the debate is not reduced to simplistic notions.

More time must be spent thinking about what kind of world we want to live in, and then build a philosophical framework around that vision, rather than just weighing in issue by issue. It is necessary to talk less about technology and more about values; all things moral cannot be ceded to one narrow religious perspective.

Progressives must move beyond historical ways of thinking about issues. Technology will change the nature of the facts and force a reexamination of the underlying belief systems (whether pro-choice, pro-environment, or pro-science.) For example, when one partner wants a frozen embryo donated to research and the other wants it implanted in another woman's womb, what is the pro-choice position? Although in favor of scientific progress, are there circumstances where it can do more harm than good? The willingness of progressives to engage in a broad rethinking of the issues will help map out powerful and compelling positions.



Conclusion

Many new technologies such as genetic testing, human genetic germline modifications, and neural imaging, to name a few, are still in their infancy. Neither conservatives nor progressives have definitively staked out these issues so there is great opportunity for shaping policy and how the issues are framed in the public mind.

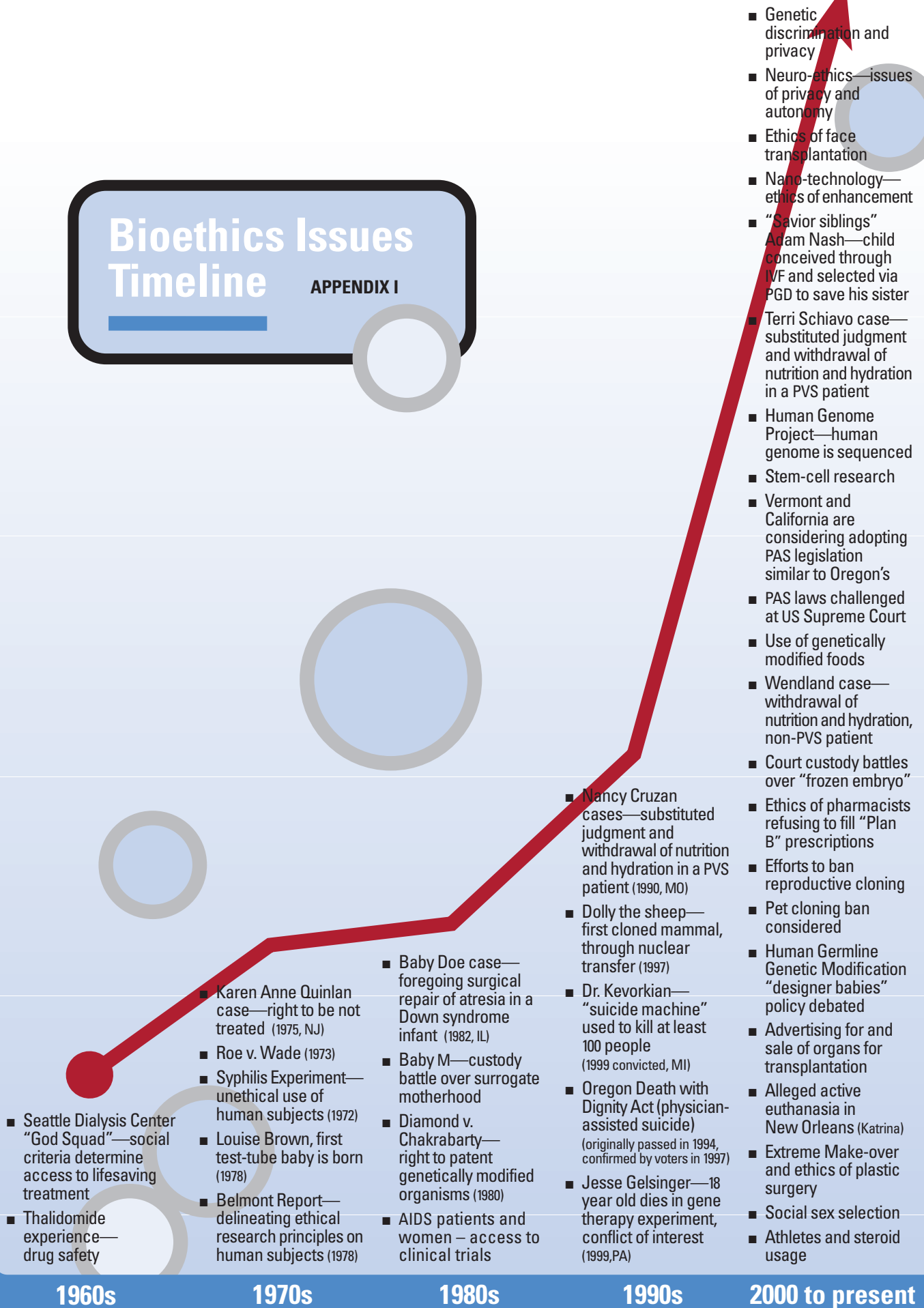
If progressives continue on the present course of tackling issues one by one, they will lose the opportunity to make a difference in where this country is headed. Only once an overarching moral framework has been established, and channels for dissemination of these views have been built, will progressives be able to compete effectively with the conservative agenda.

The goal needn't be to raise the importance of bioethics to the level of social security, education, or foreign policy in the eyes of the general public. Rather, the goal should be to pursue a bioethics agenda so that progressives have a more compelling, values-based way to talk about all issues, not just the so-called "bioethical" ones.



Bioethics Issues Timeline

APPENDIX I



- Seattle Dialysis Center “God Squad”—social criteria determine access to lifesaving treatment
- Thalidomide experience—drug safety

- Karen Anne Quinlan case—right to be not treated (1975, NJ)
- Roe v. Wade (1973)
- Syphilis Experiment—unethical use of human subjects (1972)
- Louise Brown, first test-tube baby is born (1978)
- Belmont Report—delineating ethical research principles on human subjects (1978)

- Baby Doe case—foregoing surgical repair of atresia in a Down syndrome infant (1982, IL)
- Baby M—custody battle over surrogate motherhood
- Diamond v. Chakrabarty—right to patent genetically modified organisms (1980)
- AIDS patients and women – access to clinical trials

- Nancy Cruzan cases—substituted judgment and withdrawal of nutrition and hydration in a PVS patient (1990, MO)
- Dolly the sheep—first cloned mammal, through nuclear transfer (1997)
- Dr. Kevorkian—“suicide machine” used to kill at least 100 people (1999 convicted, MI)
- Oregon Death with Dignity Act (physician-assisted suicide) (originally passed in 1994, confirmed by voters in 1997)
- Jesse Gelsinger—18 year old dies in gene therapy experiment, conflict of interest (1999, PA)

- Genetic discrimination and privacy
- Neuro-ethics—issues of privacy and autonomy
- Ethics of face transplantation
- Nano-technology—ethics of enhancement
- “Savior siblings” Adam Nash—child conceived through IVF and selected via PGD to save his sister
- Terri Schiavo case—substituted judgment and withdrawal of nutrition and hydration in a PVS patient
- Human Genome Project—human genome is sequenced
- Stem-cell research
- Vermont and California are considering adopting PAS legislation similar to Oregon’s
- PAS laws challenged at US Supreme Court
- Use of genetically modified foods
- Wendland case—withdrawal of nutrition and hydration, non-PVS patient
- Court custody battles over “frozen embryo”
- Ethics of pharmacists refusing to fill “Plan B” prescriptions
- Efforts to ban reproductive cloning
- Pet cloning ban considered
- Human Germline Genetic Modification “designer babies” policy debated
- Advertising for and sale of organs for transplantation
- Alleged active euthanasia in New Orleans (Katrina)
- Extreme Make-over and ethics of plastic surgery
- Social sex selection
- Athletes and steroid usage

1960s

1970s

1980s

1990s

2000 to present

Defining the Field

APPENDIX II

We surveyed 127 of the most influential progressive and conservative organizations including think tanks; religious, philanthropic, advocacy groups; legal and political groups; and university-based organization’s websites to determine any inclusion or activity around bioethics.

Progressive Organizations

Think Tanks

Rockridge Institute www.rockridgeinstitute.org	NO
Center for American Progress www.americanprogress.org	YES
Rainier Institute www.rainierinstitute.com	NO
New Democracy Project www.newdemocracyproject.org	NO
Economic Policy Institute www.epinet.org	NO
Commonwealth Institute www.commonwealthinstitute.org	NO
Breakthrough Institute www.thebreakthrough.org	NO
Alliance for Justice www.allianceforjustice.org	NO
Brookings Institute www.brookings.edu	YES
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace www.carnegieendowment.org	NO
The Carter Center www.cartercenter.org	NO
Center for Arts and Culture www.culturalpolicy.org	NO
Center for Community Change www.communitychange.org	NO
Center for Defense Information www.cdi.org	NO
Center for Economic And Policy Research www.cepr.net	NO
Center for Full Employment and Price Stability www.cfeps.org	NO
Center on Hunger and Poverty www.centeronhunger.org	NO
Center of International Studies www.cis.ethz.ch	NO
Center for Law and Social Policy www.clasp.org	NO
Center for Policy Alternatives www.cfpa.org	YES
Center for Public Policy Priorities www.cppp.org	NO
The Center For Strategic And International Studies www.csis.org	YES

Center for Urban Policy Research policy.rutgers.edu/cupr	NO
Citizen Works www.citizenworks.org	NO
Citizens for Tax Justice www.ctj.org	NO
Council on Foreign Relations cfr.org	NO
Electronic Frontier Foundation action.eff.org	NO
Electronic Privacy Information Center www.epic.org	YES
Financial Policy Forum/Derivatives Study Center www.financialpolicy.org	NO
Global Development And Environment Institute ase.tufts.edu/gdae	NO
Global Exchange www.globalexchange.org	YES
Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies harrisschool.uchicago.edu	NO
The Independent Institute www.independent.org	YES
Institute for Policy Research www.northwestern.edu/IPR	YES
Institute for Public Policy and Social Research www.ippsr.msu.edu	YES
Institute for Policy Studies www.ips-dc.org	NO
Institute for the Study of Homelessness and Poverty www.weingart.org	NO
Interhemispheric Research Center www.irc-online.org (now called the International Relations Center)	YES
Joint Center for Poverty Research www.jcpr.org	NO
Levy Economics Institute www.levy.org	NO
Maternal and Child Health Policy Research Center www.mchpolicy.org	NO
Medicare Rights Center www.medicarerights.org	NO
National Academy on an Aging Society www.agingociety.org	NO
National Center for Policy Research for Women and Families www.ncrw.org/digest/ncprwf.html	YES
New America Foundation www.newamerica.net	YES
OMB Watch www.ombwatch.org	YES
Political Research Associates www.publiceye.org	NO
Project on Defense Alternatives www.comw.org/pda	NO
Sojourners www.sojo.net	YES
Taxpayers for Common Sense www.taxpayer.net	NO
Union of Concerned Scientists www.ucsusa.org	YES

United For a Fair Economy www.faireconomy.org	NO
Urban Institute www.urban.org	NO
World Resources Institute www.wri.org	NO
WorldWatch Institute www.worldwatch.org	YES

Political Organizations

21st Century Democrats www.21stdems.org	NO
Americans for Democratic Action www.adaction.org	NO
EMILY's List www.emilyslist.org	NO
Green Power www.greenpower.com.au	NO
Independent Action independentaction.org	NO
National Committee For An Effective Congress www.ncec.org	NO
Progressive Majority progressivemajority.org	NO
League of Conservation Voters www.lcv.org	NO
MoveOn www.moveon.org	NO
NARAL www.naral.org	NO
National Organization for Women (NOW) www.now.org	NO
People For The American Way www.pfaw.org	NO
Planned Parenthood www.plannedparenthood.org	YES
Sierra Club www.sierraclub.org	NO
US Action www.usaction.org	NO

Advocacy Groups

Moving Ideas Network www.movingideas.org	NO
Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) www.acorn.org	NO
Act For Change www.workingforchange.com	NO
Americans for Democratic Action www.adaction.org	NO
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) www.aclu.org	NO
American Rights At Work www.americanrightsatwork.org	NO
Campaign For America's Future/Institute For America's Future www.ourfuture.org	YES
Center On Budget And Policy Priorities www.cbpp.org	NO

Common Cause www.commoncause.org	NO
Democracy In Action.org www.democracyinaction.org	NO
Economic Policy Institute www.epinet.org	NO
Fairness And Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR) www.fair.org	NO
National Training And Information Center (NTIC) www.ntic-us.org	NO
National Women's Law Center www.nwlc.org	NO
People For The American Way www.pfaw.org	NO
policyAmerica www.policyamerica.org	NO
Prison Policy Initiative www.prisonpolicy.org	NO
Public Campaign www.publiccampaign.org	NO
Public Citizen www.citizen.org	YES
Social Policy Action Network www.connectforkids.org	NO
Taxpayers for Common Sense www.taxpayer.net	NO
True Majority www.truemajority.com	NO
Working For Change www.workingforchange.com	NO

Conservative Counterparts Organizations

Think Tanks

Ethics and Public Policy Center www.eppc.org	YES
Family Research Council www.frc.org	YES
Heritage Foundation www.heritage.org	YES
National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) www.nfib.com	NO
Citizens for a Sound Economy/Freedom Works www.cse.org	NO
Independent Institute www.independent.org	YES
Galen Institute www.galen.org	YES
American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) www.alec.org	NO
National Center for Policy Analysis www.ncpa.org	YES
Club for Growth www.clubforgrowth.org	NO
Cato www.cato.org	YES
Manhattan Institute www.manhattan-institute.org	NO

Reason Foundation www.reason.org	NO
Hudson Institute www.hudson.org	YES
Hoover Institute www-hoover.stanford.edu	YES
Freedom Works/Citizens for a Sound Economy www.cse.org	NO
American Enterprise Institute www.aei.org	YES
Discovery Institute www.discovery.org	YES
Washington Institute www.washingtoninstitute.org	NO
Citizens Against Government Waste www.cagw.org	NO
Competitive Enterprise Institute www.cei.org	YES

University Based

National Association of Scholars www.nas.org	NO
Young Americas www.yaf.org	NO
Fund for American Studies www.tfas.org	NO
Mercatus Center www.mercatus.org	YES
Institute for World Policy www.worldpolicy.org	NO
Patrick Henry Center for International Liberty www.patrickhenrycenter.org	NO
Institute for Humane Studies www.theihs.org	YES
Intercollegiate Studies Institute www.isi.org	NO

Legal


Center for Individual Rights www.cir-usa.org	NO
Landmark Legal Foundation www.landmarklegal.org	NO
Washington Legal Foundation www.wlf.org	NO
Pacific Legal Foundation www.pacificlegal.org	NO
Mountain States Legal Foundation www.mountainstateslegal.org	NO
Judicial Watch www.judicialwatch.org	NO
Institute for Justice www.ij.org	NO
Federalist Society www.fed-soc.org	YES

Religious

James Dobson's Focus on the Family www.family.org	YES
Action Institute www.acton.org	YES
Institute on Religion and Public Life www.firstthings.com	YES
Institute on Religion and Democracy www.ird-renew.org	NO

Philanthropy

Capital Research Center www.capitalresearch.org	NO
Council for National Policy watch.pair.com	NO
Philanthropy Round Table www.philanthropyroundtable.org	YES

 Information was collected from a survey that took place on October 1, 2005 and is subject to change.

Top 5 Conservative Organizations with Bioethics as a Primary Agenda

APPENDIX III

NAME: Center for Bioethics and Culture Network (CBC)

Location: Oakland, CA

Year founded: 2000

Mission: The past century has seen rapid advances in medical and scientific technologies, as well as the separation of science and the sacred, whereby religion and religious values have become increasingly irrelevant in the examination of the ethical dimension of science. The pursuit of scientific and medical advances has often blurred the distinction between “what is scientifically possible” and “what is ethically permissible.” The CBC strives to bring the ethics and morals into play on issues in science, medicine and bioethics.

Issues: Stem cell research, cloning, reproductive technologies, genetics and eugenics, end of life.

Income: \$255,266 (from June 30, 2004 form 990)

Website: www.thecbc.org

NAME: Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity (CBHD)

Location: Bannockburn, IL

Year founded: 1994

Mission: Recognizing that biblical values have exercised a profound influence on Western Culture, the Center explores the potential contribution of such values as part of its work. In mid-1993, more than a dozen leading Christian bioethicists gathered to assess the noticeable lack of explicit Christian engagement in the crucial bioethics arena. This group sponsored a major conference in May 1994, The Christian Stake in Bioethics, and concurrently launched The Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity.

Issues: Managed care, end-of-life treatment, genetic intervention, cloning, stem cell research, euthanasia and suicide, and reproductive technologies.

Income: \$699,399 (from June 30, 2004 Form 990)

Website: www.cbhd.org

NAME: National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC)

Location: Philadelphia, PA

Year founded: 1972

Mission: NCBC conducts research, consultation, publishing, and education to promote human dignity in health care and the life sciences, and derives its message directly from the teachings of the Catholic Church. Today, over eighty US dioceses, and numerous foreign dioceses, receive the benefits of their affiliation with NCBC.

Issues: Stem cell research, end of life, genetics, reproductive technologies, cloning, assisted suicide, euthanasia

Income: NCBC is funded directly by the Catholic Church. Data was not available through Guidestar.

Website: www.ncbcenter.org

Name: Council for Biotechnology Policy (CBP)

Location: Washington DC

Year founded: 1991

Mission: To develop Christian perspectives on new, often difficult frontier issues (e.g., nanotechnology, artificial intelligence); and emphasize the significance of human dignity as the cornerstone of other important social and cultural values. The primary goal of CBP is to be a reliable, credible, and authoritative resource for those who seek to know and understand bioethics from a Christian perspective.

Issues: The Council has already taken a lead in shaping the policy debates on cloning and stem cell research, although the scope of its concern extends to any technology that threatens to corrupt human dignity.

Income: Unknown how much is spent on its bioethics activities. It is a project of the Wilberforce Forum, a Christian worldview advocacy arm of Prison Fellowship, a Christian prison ministry with annual income of \$57,169,049 (June 2004, Form 990)

Website: www.biotechpolicy.org

NAME: American Bioethics Advisory Commission (ABAC)

Location: Stafford, VA

Year founded: 1998 (first public document)

Mission: American Life League established the American Bioethics Advisory Commission to defend the human being, his innate dignity, and his unique nature. The American Bioethics Advisory Commission will not allow the rush toward bioethical tyranny to proceed unchecked.

Issues: Stem cell research, cloning, reproductive technologies, euthanasia, genetics, eugenics, personhood

Income: Unknown how much is spent on its bioethics activities. It is a project of the prolife group American Life League with annual income of \$7,365,884 (Dec 31, 2003 Form 990)

Website: www.all.org/abac

Top 5 Progressive Organizations with Bioethics as a Primary Agenda

APPENDIX IV

Name: IHEU–Appignani Humanist Center for Bioethics

Location: New York, NY

Year founded: 2004

Mission: By launching the IHEU-Appignani Humanist Center for Bioethics, Humanists have at last a world forum to discuss and debate a Human-centered approach to issues in bioethics, and to begin to mount a resistance to the forces of regression. Those who exploited the slow public death of Pope John Paul II, those who cannot still accept women as equal members of their own organization have no right to advance arguments based on “Human Dignity.”

Issues: There is no single Humanist position on any of the issues ranging from Euthanasia to human cloning, and it would be wise to approach the developments with caution, but what is undisputable is the need for a life asserting approach: one which does not glorify suffering.

Income: Initial grant of \$150,000, offices are housed at the UN Plaza, under the fiscal sponsorship of the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU)

Website: www.iheu.org

Name: World Transhumanist Association (WTA)

Location: Willington, CT

Year founded: 1998

Mission: The World Transhumanist Association is an international nonprofit membership organization which advocates the ethical use of technology to expand human capacities. We support the development of and access to new technologies that enable everyone to enjoy better minds, better bodies and better lives. In other words, we want people to be better than well.

Issues: Transhumanism is, in part, a civil liberties movement with roots in the most fundamental demand of liberal democracy: sane, adult citizens have a right to control their own bodies and minds. Issues of focus include biotechnology, genetic engineering, stem cell, and cloning.

Income: > \$25,000, not required to report

Website: www.transhumanism.org

Name: Council for Responsible Genetics (CRG)

Location: Cambridge, MA

Year founded: 1983

Mission: The mission of the Council for Responsible Genetics (CRG) is based on the following principles: **1.** The public must have clear and understandable information on technological innovations. **2.** The public must be able to participate in public and private decision-making concerning technological developments and their implementation. **3.** New technologies must meet social needs. **4.** Problems rooted in poverty, racism and other forms of inequality cannot be remedied by technology alone.

Issues: CRG works on a variety of issues, including: concerns around the patenting of life; genetic discrimination and privacy; agriculture and biotechnology; reproductive technologies and women; biosafety; biowarfare; and a genetic bill of rights formulated by CRG.

Income: \$300,000 (from Dec 31, 2003 Form 990)

Website: www.gene-watch.org

Name: Center of Genetics and Society (CGS)

Location: Oakland, CA

Year founded: 2001

Mission: The Center supports benign and beneficent medical applications of the new human genetic and reproductive technologies, and opposes those applications that objectify and commodify human life and threaten to divide human society.

The Center works in a context of support for the equitable provision of health technologies domestically and internationally; for women's health and reproductive rights; for the protection of our children; for the rights of the disabled; and for precaution in the use of technologies that could alter the fundamental processes of the natural world.

Issues: Issues include human cloning, inheritable genetic modification, and other human genetic and reproductive technologies.

Income: \$609,500 (from 2004 annual report) CGS is under the fiscal sponsorship of the Tides Center

Website: www.genetics-and-society.org

Name: Women's Bioethics Project (WBP)

Location: Seattle, WA

Year founded: 2004

Mission: The Women's Bioethics Project is a non-profit, non-partisan public policy think tank dedicated to ensuring that women's voices, health concerns and life experiences are brought to bear on ethical issues in health care and biotechnology. We are pro-choice, pro-science, and promote the well-being of women around the world.

Issues: Women's Bioethics Project focuses its work on three main issue areas:

Women's health: cosmetic surgery ("extreme makeover"), aging, participation in medical research, genetically modified foods, and end-of-life decision making.

Reproductive technologies: human genetic germline modification ("designer babies"), cloning, stem cell research, social sex selection, in vitro fertilization (IVF), and genetic testing.

Neuroethics: advances in functional neuroimaging, as well as by our growing understanding of the neural bases of behavior, personality, consciousness, and states of spiritual transcendence will confront us with ethical issues we can only begin to imagine.

Income: \$125,000 (under the fiscal sponsorship of the Women's Funding Alliance)

Website: www.womensbioethics.org

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