

Kathleen Schmainda & Tara Sander Lee: Wisconsin needs to protect unborn children, not exploit them for experimentation

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[Recently released polling](#) shows a majority of voters reject abortion on demand and candidates who support it. [Evidence for this encouraging trend can be seen in the nearly 500 pro-life bills advanced this year nationwide.](#) With the [U.S. Supreme Court](#) preparing to hear arguments on Mississippi's common-sense restrictions on late-term abortion, justices will decide whether to wade further into abortion policy or allow state legislatures – including Wisconsin— to act on behalf of the people.

At the top of the list are non-discrimination bans protecting children diagnosed with genetic conditions before birth. [Thirteen states](#) have enacted such bans, including 12 states that prohibit abortion on the basis of a Down syndrome diagnosis.

Unfortunately, Wisconsin is not one of these states, but should be.

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A child diagnosed with Down syndrome in utero has a [67% chance](#) of being aborted. This modern-day form of eugenics has significantly reduced the Down syndrome population, despite the [fact](#) that with appropriate medical care, they can lead healthy, happy lives.

No child, whether in the womb or out, should be discriminated against – let alone killed – because of a disability.

Even worse, Wisconsin allows researchers to traffic and experiment on the body parts of aborted babies with Down syndrome. A lead scientist at the University of Wisconsin Madison expressed eagerness in a Wisconsin State Journal [article](#) to continue her studies in response to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) [decision](#) to reverse the Trump administration's restrictions on fetal tissue research.

Extramural labs at institutions like UW Madison no longer have to undergo an external layer of [ethical review](#) when proposing to acquire, use and/or store human aborted baby body parts. This is a problem because current laws are insufficient to prevent gross negligence as reported by federal [House](#) and [Senate](#) investigations, [Judicial Watch](#), Center for Medical Progress, and the [2020 National Institutes of Health \(NIH\) Ethics Advisory Board](#).

Get ready, Wisconsin. Researchers can order baby body parts from 'warehouses' like ordering items from Amazon with "same day" or "next day" delivery options. The Birth Defects Research Laboratory at the University of Washington, Seattle is a central hub for collecting, storing, and shipping all types of aborted body parts, including those from babies with Down syndrome. The NIH tissue repository at the University of Maryland is another lab that stockpiles aborted baby body parts, but specializes in collecting aborted baby brains.

The experiments done on baby body parts are horrific. [Fetal scalps](#) from aborted babies have been stitched onto lab mice to study skin infection. [Fetal lungs](#) have been implanted onto the backs of mice to study coronavirus infection.

[Seventeen states](#) have passed legislation to ban fetal tissue research. Wisconsin is not one of these states.

We encourage Wisconsin legislators to enact laws that protect unborn lives (with and without disability) and to ban aborted fetal tissue research, which is completely unnecessary given existing [ethical alternatives](#). Destroying young lives and then using them as lab rats is not the answer to eliminating disease and disability.

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