

**Testimony for Maryland Legislature Bill 1179,
Humane Disposition of Human Remains Act**

1. I, James L. Sherley, am over the age of eighteen, reside in Boston, Massachusetts, and understand the obligations of a public legislature testimony. I hereby state the following:
2. I am a physician scientist trained in medicine, medical ethics, and cellular and molecular biology with professional experience and expertise in stem cell biomedicine and the bioethics of human subjects research. I received a Bachelor of the Arts degree in Biology from Harvard College in 1980; and joint M.D., Ph.D. degrees from the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in 1988. After 22 years as a principal investigator in cancer center (Fox Chase Cancer Center in Philadelphia), research university (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and independent biomedical research institute (Boston Biomedical Research Institute) environments, I founded a stem cell biotechnology company (Asymmetrex LLC), which I now direct. Asymmetrex is a for-profit biotechnology company that develops and markets new and innovative technologies for advancing stem cell medicine.
3. My extensive training and research contributions in adult tissue stem cell biology have led to my international recognition as an expert in stem cell biology. While at MIT and BBRI, on several occasions, I have provided expert legislature testimony, both nationally and internationally, on the biology of nascent and preborn human beings, human embryonic stem cell research, and the bioethics of human subjects research. In my role as an Associate Scholar of the Charlotte Lozier Institute, I currently actively engage in service to the public by providing education and expert testimony on the nature of human life from its earliest embryonic form and issues in the bioethics of the use of preborn humans for biomedical research.

4. Given the background, experience, and expertise set forth above, I am well-suited for providing expert testimony to support the passing of Maryland Bill 1179 (*Humane Disposition of Human Remains Act*)
5. For the reasons set forth below, it is my expert opinion that Bill 1179 is needed to insure the humane disposition of the remains of aborted human fetuses and, in so doing, prevent the commodification of human beings in the state of Maryland, set a needed standard for the rest of the United States to follow in this regard, and reduce another inducement for elective abortions.
6. There is nothing biological about birth that changes the state of being human. The preborn human being is human, and the born human being is human. Therefore, the right of the preborn human being to respectful interment of their remains should be protected, as insured by Bill 1179.
7. There is nothing biological about birth that changes the state of being human. The preborn human being is human, and the born human being is human. Therefore, parents' – and in the case of minor mothers, their parents' or guardians' – rights to timely information about the disposition of their aborted child and an opportunity to effect an appropriate interment should be protected, as insured by Bill 1179.
8. A crucial provision of Bill 1179 is preventing the use of the remains of aborted human beings, in any manner and through any means, for scientific research. Bill 1179 will not negatively impact research in the state of Maryland or elsewhere. There are many other alternative research material sources and research approaches that make the use of aborted fetal remains unnecessary. In fact, the quality of scientific research would improve in many ways, if states maintaining this practice ended it. For example, many investigators find themselves in moral conflict over the bioethical trespass of performing studies with the remains of aborted babies.

9. Creativity and solution finding is intrinsic to the scientific process. Given an ethical guide for their work, scientists will find other ways of making the discoveries they seek. The recent development of induced pluripotent stem cells, as an alternative to human embryonic stem cells produced by destroying human embryos, is one very relevant example of the power of scientists to invent morally and ethically acceptable alternatives for their work.
10. Though an adamantly debated issue, legal permission for the use of aborted fetal remains for biomedical research may promote higher rates of elective abortion. To the extent that such an effect operates, Bill 1179 will mitigate it in the state of Maryland and potentially beyond by preventing the inter-state transfer of aborted fetal remains across Maryland's border for unnecessary research purposes.
11. Perhaps Bill 1179's most important attribute is stemming the dehumanization of the remains of aborted babies. Throughout human history, dehumanization of human beings is the act that has promoted and maintained some of the worst atrocities in human civilizations. By recognizing and protecting the human dignity of the remains of aborted babies, Bill 1179 will also acknowledge the humanity of preborn babies themselves, both before and during their untimely, elective deaths. This will give the citizens of Maryland and the country watching a better basis of reflecting on the horrific impact of elective abortions not only against the vulnerable group of human persons affected directly, but also on the character of the greater society that has the power to save them.

Signed,

March 12, 2020

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James Sheley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James L. Sherley, M.D., Ph.D.