

March 4, 1997 - White House Press Release

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

SUBJECT: Prohibition on Federal Funding for Cloning of Human Beings

Recent accounts of advances in cloning technology, including the first successful cloning of an adult sheep, raise important questions. They potentially represent enormous scientific breakthroughs that could offer benefits in such areas as medicine and agriculture. But the new technology also raises profound ethical issues, particularly with respect to its possible use to clone humans. That is why last week I asked our National Bioethics Advisory Commission to thoroughly review the legal and ethical issues associated with the use of this technology and report back to me in 90 days.

Federal funds should not be used for cloning of human beings. The current restrictions on the use of Federal funds for research involving human embryos do not fully assure this result. In December 1994, I directed the National Institutes of Health not to fund the creation of human embryos for research purposes. The Congress extended this prohibition in FY 1996 and FY 1997 appropriations bills, barring the Department of Health and Human Services from supporting certain human embryo research. However, these restrictions do not explicitly cover human embryos created for implantation and do not cover all Federal agencies. I want to make it absolutely clear that no Federal funds will be used for human cloning. Therefore, I hereby direct that no Federal funds shall be allocated for cloning of human beings.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON