

Senate Committee on Medical Affairs
PO Box 142 Columbia, SC 29202

Dear Chairman Verdin, III; Senator Hutto; and members of the Senate Committee on Medical Affairs;

On behalf of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM), I am writing to express strong opposition to S 988 which would curtail the reproductive rights of the residents of South Carolina.

ASRM is a multidisciplinary organization of nearly 8,000 professionals dedicated to the advancement of the art, science, and practice of reproductive medicine. Distinguished members of ASRM include obstetricians and gynecologists, urologists, reproductive endocrinologists, embryologists, mental health professionals and others.

ASRM is concerned that S 988, as drafted, will have unintended consequences on the treatment of infertility in South Carolina. By equating a recently fertilized egg, still in a medical facility and not yet transferred into a woman's body in hopes of establishing a pregnancy, with a fully formed child, this bill threatens the ability of physicians to safely perform In Vitro Fertilization and related procedures in accordance with best medical practices.

For example, the cryopreservation (freezing) of fertilized eggs and embryos is an essential component of fertility care. Multiple gestations and multiple births are very dangerous for mothers and children. Current standard of care calls for the transfer of only a single embryo into the woman. Other embryos created can be cryopreserved for later use by the patient in order to maximize prospects for a successful outcome without increasing the risk for a multiple pregnancy. Moreover, for women about to undergo lifesaving treatments for cancer, treatments which may otherwise render them unable to have children, embryo cryopreservation is the best way to preserve their ability to have children once their cancer has been treated.

In addition, other techniques in which the fertilized egg is tested, in order to avoid genetic or chromosomal disorders, could be threatened by the current language of this bill.

Human reproduction is a very inefficient process. Without medical assistance, fewer than 20% of fertilized eggs will implant in the uterus and lead to the birth of a child. Treating the fertilized egg as legally equal to a born, living human being will create unintended, dangerous consequences.

We strongly urge you to oppose S 988.

For more information, feel free to contact me or Sean Tipton, our Chief Advocacy and Policy officer at Stipton@asrm.org or 202-421-5112.

Sincerely,

Marcelle I. Cedars, MD



President

American Society for Reproductive Medicine