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Aug. 30, 2016

Office of Science Policy
The National Institutes of Health
6705 Rockledge Drive, Suite 750
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Dear NIH Researchers:

Recently I discovered that the NIH plans to lift its moratorium on tax payer funding of ESCR that involves the creation of human-animal chimeras. I'm writing today to urge you not to do this.

Such research is ethically troubling for a number of reasons. First, human embryos are destroyed to harvest their stem cells. Second, animals will be produced that may have partly human or even substantially human brains. Third, such research involves the production of animals that may have human sperm or eggs; and lastly, it allows human ESCs to be introduced into animal embryos in their early development in such a way that it will be hard to know the extent to which the human cells contribute to the final organism.

Researchers won't know what their moral obligations are toward these human-animal entities. Their very existence blurs the line between humans and non-human animals. It appears that the NIH has given little, if any, consideration to the ethical concerns presented by this research.

I urge you to maintain the current moratorium on funding research that involves creating and manipulating human-animal chimeras.

Sincerely,

Sharon Soderlund