

Marion O'Neill
State Representative
District 29B
Wright County



Minnesota House of Representatives

COMMITTEES:

VICE CHAIR, HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY AND FINANCE
GREATER MINNESOTA ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT POLICY
JOB GROWTH AND ENERGY AFFORDABILITY POLICY AND FINANCE
PUBLIC SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION POLICY AND FINANCE
RULES AND LEGISLATIVE ADMINISTRATION

October 22, 2015

The University of Minnesota Board of Regents
600 McNamara Alumni Center
200 Oak Street SE
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455-2020

To the Board of Regents:

I was deeply disappointed to learn the University of Minnesota, which receives substantial funding from taxpayers (over \$1.2 billion for Fiscal Years 2016-17), has purchased and used fetal tissue from Advanced Bioscience Resources Inc. going as far back as 2008 through 2014. Advanced Bioscience Resources Inc. has a practice of procuring fetal tissue from aborted babies for the purposes of research. Additionally, after my recent meeting with University Vice President for Research Dr. Brian Herman, I discovered fetal tissue was purchased prior to 2008, and as many as ten university employees are currently using aborted fetal tissue to conduct research.

I have the honor of serving as the Vice Chair of the House Higher Education Committee, and in that capacity, I've been able to see why the University of Minnesota is held in such high regard both within our state and around the world. It would be unfortunate for such a reputation to be diminished because of morally questionable research practices.

As a concerned citizen, mother of a University of Minnesota student, and Vice Chair of the House Higher Education Committee, it is my sincere hope that the University of Minnesota will alter its policy and ban the use of any aborted fetal tissue purchase or research in the future. If the university feels this research must continue, I encourage a policy that only allows the use of fetal tissue donations from naturally occurring deaths.



Additionally, I am concerned about how members of the University Of Minnesota Board Of Regents had no previous knowledge of this kind of fetal tissue research prior to recently released reports.

Within the past year, when asked directly about aborted fetal tissue research, legislators were informed that it was not being done and went against university policy. Now it has become public that not only have University of Minnesota researchers been potentially purchasing and using aborted fetal tissue for the past several years, but administrative policy allows for the purchase as long as it complies with state and federal regulation.

In addition to requesting that you ban the use and purchase of aborted fetal tissue, I also ask that you clarify why university leaders had expressed no previous knowledge of the situation.

It is my belief that the restoration of reputation is in the best interest of the University of Minnesota and to do so, the Board of Regents therefore comply with the aforementioned requests. I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marion O'Neill". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Marion O'Neill
Vice Chair, House Higher Education Policy and Finance Committee