Chairman Dean and Health & Human Services Finance Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today in support of HF 2865, which ensures investment in ethical research opportunities while clearly re-iterating high standards for the disposition of human remains to prevent their exploitation. I am very appreciative of Rep. Whelan’s tireless efforts in bringing forward this legislation, and for her invitation to be here today.

Respect for human dignity is essential in the performance of scientific research. As a UW-Madison undergraduate in the Medical Scholars Program, I heard a declaration from more than one professor that ethical questions about experimentation could be “set aside and dealt with later” as long as there was great “potential” for medical breakthroughs. I remember that one of those professors later had his lab suspended because of unauthorized experiments with the bacterial infectant brucellosis. Unfortunately, such a philosophy can, and has been, also used throughout history to justify a great number of atrocities in the name of ‘research’. It was shortly after a professor related how the remains of dead children killed by the local abortionist (who also happened to retain his position on the UW Medical School faculty) were being regularly shuttled over to the UW for experimentation that I began to rethink medical research as a career.

The footage released last year by the Center for Medical Progress has raised awareness of legislation that I have introduced each of the three sessions that I have been in the Wisconsin State Assembly to ban the sale, trafficking and exploitation of tissue from aborted children. Contrary to common perception, the sale of aborted babies’ body parts is not already outlawed by federal law unless it takes place across state lines. And to get around federal law on interstate sales, the statements by Planned Parenthood officials in the undercover videos make clear that abortion clinics simply extract their ‘market price’ for the parts in the form of accumulated and very loosely regulated ‘reimbursement fees’.

In fact, Stem Express (which partners with Planned Parenthood at several clinics) clearly and repeatedly promises “profits” in exchange for aborted baby body parts in flyers sent to Planned Parenthood affiliates. Even microbiologist Nathalia Holt, in writing a New York Times essay condoning experimentation on aborted children, openly acknowledges that harvesting human fetal organs is part of widespread and lucrative business, noting “There are profits to be made by such middlemen in what critics call the abortion industry. A fetus runs upward of $850, not including testing, cleaning, or shipping charges, while a vial packed with pure stem cells can fetch more than $20,000.”

***It is a grisly trade, which explains why in Minnesota, as in Wisconsin, there has been so much effort to first deny its very existence, and then subsequently claim that potential ends justify the unconscionable means used.*** I have heard many stories or denials from UW officials relating to the research that has been conducted and the efforts surrounding it that were substantially changed or completely backtracked days, weeks or months later… often only after public information became available revealing their deception. What I am starting to hear coming from the University of Minnesota seems all too familiar.

During the 1990s, researchers at UW-Madison initiated several experiments utilizing aborted fetal body parts, but they were only more recently discovered through internal UW documents and research logs — including a thank you to former Madison abortionist Dr. Dennis Christensen for his provision of aborted babies to UW officials.

It is deeply disturbing that as UW officials sought to open a late-term abortion clinic at the UW Surgery Center shortly before my election to the legislature, that the spokeswoman for UW Health *publicly cited the potential for induced abortions at the facility to serve as a supply of fetal body parts for UW research- another impetus for my legislation*. Those plans were scuttled, initially due to public pressure and permanently by a provision I authored within the subsequent state budget. The UW at the time swiftly moved to walk back their spokeswoman’s comments; publicly, and fraudulently, downplaying any such interest in local procurement of aborted tissue when it was in fact already occurring and seeking to avoid any acknowledgement of their aborted fetal research practices.

Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin has now stated that they do not offer tissue donation services. And at an Assembly hearing, the Dean of the UW Medical School, Dr. Robert Golden also stated, “we do not receive our tissues from abortion clinics.” What he didn’t say, though, and what the UW Health has subsequently acknowledged, is that the UW has received tissue directly from Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, at least as recently as 2011. It has surfaced that organs from many aborted babies were apparently harvested by UW faculty at the Madison Planned Parenthood abortion clinic between 2009 and 2011 for a UW-Madison study by eleven faculty members published in 2014 which details experimentation on fourteen hearts and ten brains of aborted children. This was only finally admitted by the UW because a published version of the paper was located which “gratefully acknowledged” four UW faculty, two of whom also worked as abortionists at the Madison Planned Parenthood, “for their support with tissue collection and processing”.Planned Parenthood’s medical director for their Madison abortion clinic at that time was UW Professor Caryn Dutton, and five other UW professors with prestigious positions were also employed at the time by Planned Parenthood, as indicated in Dr. Dutton’s contract with PP, which ‘purchased’ her hours from the UW. That MOU was signed by Dr. Robert Golden, the Dean of the UW Medical School. That’s right- UW personnel effectively counseled women, performed abortions on them, harvested the organs of their dead babies, and performed experiments on them- and had it approved by the UW institutional Review Board (a member of which is the UW’s most frequently used “bioethics expert” and served on the national Planned Parenthood medical advisory board).

The increasingly discredited Dean of the UW Medical School, Dr. Golden, also claimed last year that the UW needed to acquire tissue from aborted children specifically to develop a vaccine for the Ebola virus. In reality, a successful new vaccine against Ebola, rVSV-ZEBOV, had already been broadly tested and found 100% effective- but it was developed using vero, a monkey cell line, not aborted human tissue.

Most shockingly, during an Assembly Committee hearing on my similar legislation last year, Dr. Golden was specifically asked if any of the tissues used by the UW come from Stem Express or ABR, which were featured as the tissue procurement entities in the Planned Parenthood exposés. His answer was, “I have no way of knowing.” Following the hearing, however, the finally UW acknowledged using ABR repeatedly and as one of their current suppliers. Stunningly, it was just uncovered earlier this year that the UW researcher who has repeatedly been ordering aborted children’s tissues from ABR is none other than Dr. Golden’s wife, making his past testimony even more implausible, if that were possible.

A report last year by the Wisconsin Gannett Newspaper groups’ Investigative Team also did a great service to readers in identifying that widespread research alternatives have come to dominate the field and discrediting the wildly inflated economic impact claims made to lawmakers by the UW with actual, accurate figures, pointing out little research is actually done with fetal tissue at UW-Madison, representing just a fraction of a percent of its research budget- and with no cures or successful treatments resulting despite the false hopes and unsubstantiated claims peddled to desperate patients and their families.

HF 2865 does not ban tissue donation or research- it encourages both to occur in responsible fashion. It does not prohibit any particular type of tissue from being experimented on, nor stop any particular method of experimentation- it only requires that the source of tissue that is experimented on cannot come from an induced abortion. Research on ethically derived fetal tissue has taken place for decades. Yet prior to 1992, research using aborted fetal tissue was not even eligible for NIH funding, for good reason.

Experiments identical to those being conducted with aborted children’s tissues could be performed with cells which could have been derived through ethical means, if such an attempt had been made. From a research standpoint, there are equivalent or better sources of fetal material found in amniotic fluid, umbilical cord blood and placental tissue with no ethical concerns. The Sacramento Business Journal last year reported that “The stem cell program at UC Davis does not use any fetal tissues, so the university has not been involved with the issue directly, said Dr. Jan Nolta, director of the stem cell program and Institute for Regenerative Cures at UC Davis. “We focus on adult stem cell therapies — and have ten of those in the clinic or recently completed, with 18 more in the pipeline. So we keep busy with those.” There are many alternatives.

Dr. Maureen Condic,associate professor of neurobiology and anatomy at the University of Utah School of Medicine, writes, *“A search of the NIH-administered database of clinical trials for the terms “fetal stem cell” returns only 21 currently funded human trials (only two of which actually involve transplantation of fetal stem cells), compared with 5,072 trials using non-fetal cells. Science has indeed spoken — but not in support of fetal-stem-cell research.”* Those who experiment on aborted babies’ body parts do it not because they have to, but because they can. Similarly, an August 3, 2015 Reuters article reports that at the Harvard-affiliated Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, for instance, only about 10 out of 8,000 active research protocols involve fetal tissue.

Some will say that research on aborted children should continue, so that “some good will come of it.” A similar philosophy would justify the continuing occurrence of mass forced organ harvesting and transplantation from executed political prisoners to the well-connected, such as with the spiritual practitioners of Falun Gong in China. Several Wisconsin Falun Gong adherents have contacted me in support of my legislation because they see the dangerous slippery slope that aborted fetal tissue exploitation represents.

While abortion may currently be legal in most circumstances, the intentional killing of a child through an induced makes valid consent for research impossible. We have learned from history that when we devalue the dignity and worth of members of the human family that any abuse is possible. Sickeningly, this has been extended to viewing aborted children as commodities, prizing the humanity of their tissues above that of the babies themselves.   
  
I ask for your support of HF 2865, and again, thank you for your consideration today.