

Bill's demise called positive

By Veronica Daehn and Jill Zeman

Staff writers

A lot can change in four months. A discovery made by the Omaha World-Herald last November that the University of Nebraska Medical Center was conducting research using aborted fetal tissue spawned controversy throughout the state of Nebraska.

It produced four long months of heated debate between supporters of research using aborted fetal tissue and those who oppose it.

The issue was brought to the Legislature in January.

And now, after four months of lobbying, four months of phone calls to state senators and four months of protests, it's all over, for this year at least.

Tuesday, LB1405, which would have prohibited research at state schools using aborted fetal tissue, was abruptly pulled from the floor by its principal introducer, Sen. John Hilgert of Omaha.

Members of the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska voted to lobby against the bill, and ASUN President Andy Schuerman said he wasn't surprised the bill failed because he realized there wouldn't be enough votes for its passage.

"I'm glad the Legislature has decided to re-focus their efforts this

session," he said.

Schuerman said he felt ASUN's Government Liaison Committee did a good job of organizing students to contact the state senators.

"Every little bit helps," he said. Schuerman said currently there isn't much student activism, and UNMC's research using aborted fetal tissue brought out a lot of emotions among University of Nebraska-Lincoln students.

"Students for Life did an impressive job lobbying, as well as student groups who opposed (LB1405)," Schuerman said.

ASUN president-elect Joel Schafer said he was pleased the bill did not advance.

"I am relieved I won't have to open my administration with this issue," he said.

Schafer and first vice president-elect Riley Peterson said they were prepared to deal with any controversy surrounding the aborted fetal tissue research, but they were pleased they can focus on other issues.

"The fact that there's not going to be a forum right away with 100 angry students will make things a lot easier," Peterson said.

The NU Board of Regents voted to support UNMC's research using aborted fetal tissue, and many regents were pleased with Hilgert's decision to pull the bill.

"I don't think any good would have

come from further discussion," said Regent Don Blank of McCook. "We're doing the right thing (at UNMC)."

Blank said he hoped people would have time to sit down and talk about the issue now.

Regent Robert Allen of Hastings agreed.

"This gives all of us a chance to catch our breath and talk about this," Allen said. "I'm very pleased that happened."

UNMC is using the aborted fetal tissue cells for research on neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases.

Allen said the research could benefit a large number of people.

"Fetal tissue is so important as a research material," Allen said. "To stop these scientists would be a tremendous setback for the state."

Lyons Regent Chuck Hassebrook said he was relieved at the Legislature's decision.

"That's the right approach," Hassebrook said. "If that bill had passed now, the research would have been forced to stop. That would have put millions of people at risk."

Hassebrook said the university now needs to focus on finding alternative sources of tissue.

"We need to retain the commitment to research and develop a cure for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's," Hassebrook said. "It's absolutely essential."

Senator ends tenure of fetal tissue proposal

BILL from page 1

tinue to look for alternative sources of tissue.

"The university has made some changes, and, hopefully, they'll make one more," he said.

Hilgert said he did not oppose the research itself.

The use of fetal tissue from elective abortions is the problem, he said.

He said the use of fetal tissue by a state university may have alienated some Nebraska residents.

"We want the people of Nebraska to support the university," he said.

Gov. Mike Johanns had said earlier he would sign the bill into law if it passed.

Chris Peterson, spokesman for the governor, said Johanns was disappointed Tuesday after the bill's withdrawal.

"(Johanns) believes the research can go on without the use of fetal tissue from elective abortions," Peterson said.

Johanns wasn't surprised the bill was pulled, though, Peterson said, because only 28 senators voted to pull the bill from committee.

"The governor knew several days ago it would be tough (for the bill to pass)," Peterson said.

Before Hilgert's withdrawal, several senators opposed to the bill called the measure unconstitutional.

Sen. Gerald Matzke of Sidney was one of those senators.

"I am so appalled that an unconstitutional bill like this could be brought before this Legislature," Matzke said. "This bill absolutely destroys the discretion of the Board of Regents."

"It never should have been passed out of committee, and we should not be voting on it."


Scarlet & Cream Singers

The Nebraska Alumni Association and the NU School of Music present the Scarlet & Cream Singers in their annual Spring Concert at 8:00 p.m., April 1, in Kimball Hall. Call the Lied Center Box Office at (402) 472-4747 for tickets.

Ticket prices are \$5 for students and seniors (age 65 and over), \$10 for alumni association members, and \$12 for general public.




Nebraska
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA - LINCOLN



The Transmission of Trauma Across Generations:

Writing a Memoir About Growing Up in the Suburbs and the Armenian Genocide

Peter Balakian
Colgate University Professor of English




Thursday, March 30, 2000
Nebraska Union Auditorium
7:30 p.m.

Sponsored by the Harris Center for Judaic Studies

University of Nebraska - Lincoln
NU is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution.

You're a complete moron




But don't worry 'Cause now you can have access to the latest research in an easy-to-use search tree. Academic Edition. Created from thousands of magazines, journals and newspapers. Made fresh daily. And all yours.


sixdegrees.com/research

SEARCH FOR:

Arts and Humanities • Applied Science and Technology • Science • Psychology • Business and Economics
Education • Telecommunications and Computing • Social Science • Recreational Reading



RESEARCH
ACADEMIC EDITION
ENGINE



The Post & Nickel

Just Arrived,
the Greatest
Spring Fashions
and Shoes

The Post & Nickel. Distinctive clothing,
sportswear, and shoes.

Lincoln 14th & P - Omaha 132nd & Center