

**Additional Testimony of  
Dr. Norig Ellison, President, American Society of Anesthesiologists,  
Before the Senate Judiciary Committee  
November 17, 1995**

*After Dr. Ellison presented his prepared testimony to the Judiciary Committee, which is reproduced elsewhere, the following exchange occurred among Senator Spence Abraham (R-Mi.); Dr. Mary Campbell, medical director of Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington; and Dr. Ellison.*

SEN. ABRAHAM [to Dr. Campbell]: Would you make the statement then that the fetus dies due to the anesthesia? Is that your position?

DR. CAMPBELL (Medical Director, Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington): I think the fetus has no pain because of the anesthesia. I do not...

SEN. ABRAHAM: No, I'm asking you whether you think that's what causes the fetus to die?

DR. CAMPBELL: I do not know what causes the fetus to die. The fetuses are dead when delivered.

SEN. ABRAHAM: Well, let me just direct you, if I could -- I have here a factsheet that indicates it was prepared by you which relates to the House legislation in which...

[Sen. Abraham was referring to "H.R. 1833, Medical Questions and Answers," which contains the caption, "Fact Sheet Prepared by Mary Campbell, M.D." This document was circulated to members of the House of Representatives in October, before HR 1833 came to a vote in that house. This document contains the following passage:

"Q: When does the fetus die?

"A: The fetus dies of an overdose of anesthesia given to the mother intravenously. A dose is calculated for the mother's weight which is 50 to 100 times the weight of the fetus. The mother gets the anesthesia for each insertion of the dilators, twice a day. This induces brain death in a fetus in a matter of minutes. Fetal demise therefore occurs at the beginning of the procedure while the fetus is still in the womb."]

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DR. CAMPBELL: I was quoting Dr. McMahon at that time. [EDITOR'S NOTE: There is no reference to Dr. McMahon anywhere in Dr. Campbell's five-page factsheet.]  
On thinking it over in more depth, I believe because there are no EEG studies available...

SEN. ABRAHAM: So you no longer adhere to the position that you say in here, "the fetus dies of an overdose of anesthesia given to the mother intravenously." That is no longer your position?

DR. CAMPBELL: I believe that is true.

SEN. ABRAHAM: You believe that is true?

DR. CAMPBELL: I believe that is true.

SEN. ABRAHAM: Dr. Ellison, would you like to comment on that?

DR. ELLISON (President, American Society of Anesthesiologists): There is absolutely no basis in scientific fact for that statement. There is -- I can present you a study in the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, 1989, by [names inaudible] et al, of 5,400 cases of women having surgery having general anesthesia or regional anesthesia in which the fetus did not suffer demise. I think the suggestion that the anesthesia given to the mother, be it regional or general, is going to cause brain death of the fetus is without basis of fact.

DR. CAMPBELL: I have not said brain death. I'm saying no spontaneous respirations, no movement.

SEN. ABRAHAM: Well, that's what you are saying today, but in this fact sheet, which you prepared I believe fairly recently, it says, "The fetus dies"-- there's no qualifying regarding breathing or anything else-- "of an overdose of anesthesia." I mean, that is a very clear statement assertion.

DR. CAMPBELL: [Pause] I simplified that for Congress. [Outburst of laughter from audience.] I do not actually believe that you want a full discussion of when death occurs.

SEN. ABRAHAM: Well, we are forced to make those decisions, and I guess my question is that how many other things would you say in the fact sheet or in your statements today have been likewise simplified in this dramatic fashion?

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DR. CAMPBELL: Since I have over 28 years of education and experience in medicine, I would say that is a great deal less and a great deal more simple than what I know.

SEN. ABRAHAM: Well, it seems to me that there's a rather substantial disparity between what Dr. Ellison says and what you are both saying now and have certainly written here. I just am wondering how that bears on other comments that have been made.

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