

Georgia Legislature Passes Nation's First Embryo Adoption Law

ATLANTA, April 3 /Christian Newswire/ -- By a vote of 108 to 61, the Georgia House sent the nation's first ever embryo adoption bill, HB 388, to the desk of Governor Sonny Perdue for him to sign into law.

"We are pleased that we are making headway in our goal of establishing personhood for the pre-born" says Daniel Becker, President of Georgia Right to Life. "Gone are the terms designating the human child at an embryonic stage as property ... devoid of rights." says Becker.

The language of the bill stops short of declaring full personhood for the child but does introduce new terms that acknowledge for the first time that an embryo has "rights and responsibilities" that are owed to it under Georgia law. "Legal embryo custodian" replaces "embryo donor" throughout Georgia's new code sections dealing with embryo adoption. No longer is an embryo described as being "donated" by its genetic parent.

"Gametes, cars, old clothes and other property are 'donated'" says the bill's author, House Rep. James Mills, "not children ... they are adopted."

It also clarifies that an embryo's life begins "at a single-celled" stage. "This is an important distinction as we see the medical community attempt to lessen the personhood of an embryo by re-defining a zygote to be a 'pre-embryo'" says Becker.

"Estimates are that over 40,000 cryo-preserved human embryos are abiding in concentration cans in our state," says Becker, "this will allow them an opportunity to have a birthday."

It is also possible that a Federal Adoption Tax Credit will now be available to parents to offset the legal costs of adoption. The limit under IRS guidelines is \$11,500.

"We look forward next year to the passage of a companion bill, SB169, the Ethical Treatment of Human Embryos. This would effectively ban therapeutic and reproductive cloning, destructive embryonic stem cell research and human/animal hybrids." says Becker. The Georgia Senate had passed SB 169 by a vote of 34 to 22.

Other pro-life initiatives passed this session include Senate Resolution 328, "that the members of this body recognize that the right to life is paramount and the need for protection of the lives of the innocent at every stage."

Georgia Right to Life (www.grtl.org) promotes respect and effective legal protection for all human life from its earliest biological beginning through natural death. GRTL is one of the number of organizations that have adopted Personhood (www.personhood.net) as the most effective pro-life strategy for the 21st century.