

How Prenatal Genetic Testing Misinformation Prompts Some Parents to Abort Babies

A recent *New York Times* article highlighted the vast inconsistencies in prenatal genetic testing, revealing that a startling 85% of babies who are identified with developmental abnormalities, such as Down syndrome or Prader-Willi syndrome, are falsely labeled. These tests, which are designed to give parents and doctors a better look at the health of babies before they are born, are actually inspiring parents to abort their babies due to unreliable data.

In response to these troubling statistics, American Family Association Action's (AFAA) Vice President of Policy and Legislative Affairs Rob Chambers joined with the Pro-Life Coalition to write an urgent letter to select members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate. AFAA is the governmental affairs affiliate of the American Family Association (AFA,).

Chambers and the coalition wrote, "We write to you today on behalf of the millions of pro-life Americans we represent across the country to express our concern regarding the faulty science underpinning prenatal genetic testing. This situation requires immediate attention from Congress because these all too often inaccurate and flawed tests have tragically misled pregnant women into terminating otherwise healthy pregnancies. We therefore respectfully request that both the Senate Subcommittee on Healthcare and the House Subcommittee on Health investigate whether the Center for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) is properly regulating non-invasive prenatal tests (NIPTs).

"These tests, which are marketed to expectant families as a

way to determine whether their unborn child suffers from a rare genetic condition, are wrong a remarkable 85% of the time according to one recent report. Considering the fact that these unreliable tests are now used by more than a third of pregnant women in America and that many families have tragically opted for an abortion when a potentially false positive is rendered instead of seeking another test to confirm the result, the lives of millions of unborn children are at risk.”

The coalition outlined the two steps needed by Congress in order to address this issue.

“In light of these concerning reports,” the letter states, “we respectfully request that lawmakers on Capitol Hill take immediate action. First, Congress should ensure that anyone receiving an NIPT is warned that the tests are largely inaccurate. Second, the financial models of these testing companies are based on Medicaid covering the costs of these tests for average and low risk pregnancies. Just as the Hyde Amendment prevents the use of federal funds to cover the cost of abortion, under no circumstances should Medicaid be extended to cover tests that may mislead women into killing their unborn children.” {eo}

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