



April 8<sup>th</sup> 2020

The Honorable Jan Schakowsky  
2367 Rayburn House Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mark Pocan  
1421 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

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\*on leave of absence

241 18th Street South  
Suite 501  
Arlington, VA 22202

P 703.739.2577

F 703.739.2372

E [info@researchamerica.org](mailto:info@researchamerica.org)

Dear Congresswoman Schakowsky and Congressman Pocan,

I am writing to thank you for introducing the Protecting Cures Act of 2020. Redundant administrative requirements are blocking research that could speed progress against COVID-19, and we appreciate your efforts to address those requirements.

As it stands, human fetal tissue (HFT) research cannot move forward. Current HFT research projects have been stalled and further funding is at a standstill. The Administration has imposed an additional layer of scrutiny by an “ethics advisory board,” on top of the already required ethical review and the peer review process. This new requirement is more than an additional hurdle, it is a solid roadblock: the advisory board has yet to be constituted, meaning that scientists who are prepared to contribute to the COVID-19 response are simply waiting.

HFT research has not only played a crucial role in the response to Zika and other infectious health threats, but has already produced advances with demonstrable significance for developing COVID-19 advances.

For example, in October 2019, a laboratory published a new biologic model using HFT specifically to be used to study corona viruses.<sup>1</sup> This new model and other uses of HFT could potentially speed the development of therapies for COVID-19. The restrictions on HFT research passed in 2019 have prevented all NIH-funded researchers from using this valuable biomedical research tool.<sup>2</sup>

Our nation and the global community do not have the luxury of time. We are truly grateful that you are championing this cause and stand ready to assist your efforts.

Sincerely,

Mary Woolley  
President and CEO, Research!America

1. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/31451733>

2. <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2019/06/05/statement-from-the-department-of-health-and-human-services.html>