April 30, 2019

The Honorable Autumn Burke
State Capitol, Room 5144
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 922 – Support

Dear Assemblymember Burke:

RESOLVE: The National Infertility Association, representing more than 858,000 men and women in California who suffer from infertility, supports AB 922, which repeals the current ban on compensating women for providing human oocytes for research. The bill allows a woman providing human oocytes for research to be compensated for her time, discomfort, and inconvenience in the same manner as other research subjects. Appropriate compensation amounts would be determined by human subject research panels and institutional review boards in accordance with federal regulations, which weigh rewarding people to participate in research while guarding against compensation which may provide undue inducement.

Research is critical to the progress of medicine, particularly in the field of reproduction and fertility where many unanswered questions remain. Only through research – through translating science from the laboratory to clinical practice – can treatment options and patient outcomes be improved. Without compensation for oocyte donations, few women participate in research, creating barriers to reproductive and other biomedical research that could benefit all women.

The ability to appropriately compensate women who donate their oocytes for research is consistent with the well-established practice of compensating subjects for their participation in biomedical research. Similarly, if paying oocyte donors is an acceptable practice for infertility treatment, it should also be acceptable to compensate donors who provide their eggs for research. Eliminating the prohibition on compensating women for providing human oocytes for research, as proposed under AB 922, has the potential to advance reproductive research and improve health care options for patients.
We are well aware that compensation is allowed in 47 other states, so it is not that research using oocytes doesn’t occur. It just can’t occur in California with our internationally respected research institutions. When legitimate research is restricted in California, it causes the best and the brightest to migrate to research institutions in states allowing compensation, just as occurred with a Harvard researcher moving to New York, and eventually being part of the team to make the breakthrough cure for mitochondrial disease. If there is a flaw in the system to protect clinical research participants, then there would be widespread abuses which should be addressed. The opponents will focus on fear of the potential instead of the fact that research participants are well protected under the current structures.

As always, we appreciate your consideration of our views and your leadership in authoring this bill. Should you have any questions on our position on AB 922, please do not hesitate to contact me at 703.556.7172 or bcollura@resolve.org.

Sincerely,

Barbara Collura
President/CEO

cc: Jim Wood, Chair, Assembly Health Committee