

**Executive Order 13521—Establishing the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues**

*November 24, 2009*

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered as follows:

*Section 1. Establishment.* There is established within the Department of Health and Human Services the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues (Commission).

*Sec. 2. Mission.*

(a) The Commission shall advise the President on bioethical issues that may emerge as a consequence of advances in biomedicine and related areas of science and technology. The Commission shall pursue its work with the goal of identifying and promoting policies and practices that ensure scientific research, healthcare delivery, and technological innovation are conducted in an ethically responsible manner. To achieve this goal, the Commission shall:

- (i) identify and examine specific bioethical, legal, and social issues related to the potential impacts of advances in biomedical and behavioral research, healthcare delivery, or other areas of science and technology;
- (ii) recommend any legal, regulatory, or policy actions it deems appropriate to address these issues; and
- (iii) critically examine diverse perspectives and explore possibilities for useful international collaboration on these issues.

(b) In support of its mission, the Commission may examine issues linked to specific technologies, including but not limited to the creation of stem cells by novel means; intellectual property issues involving genetic sequencing, biomarkers, and other screening tests used for risk assessment; and the application of neuro- and robotic sciences. It may also examine broader issues not linked to specific technologies, including but not limited to the protection of human research participants; scientific integrity and conflicts of interest in research; and the intersection of science and human rights.

(c) The Commission shall not be responsible for the review and approval of specific projects.

(d) The Commission may accept suggestions of issues for consideration from executive departments and agencies and the public as it deems appropriate in support of its mission.

(e) In establishing priorities for its activities, the Commission shall consider, among other things, the significance of particular issues; the need for legal, regulatory, and policy guidance with respect to such issues; the connection of the issues to the goal of Federal advancement of science and technology; and the availability of other appropriate entities or fora for deliberating on the issues.

(f) The Commission is authorized to conduct original empirical and conceptual research, commission papers and studies, hold hearings, and establish committees and subcommittees, as necessary. The Commission is authorized to develop reports or other materials.

*Sec. 3. Membership.*

(a) The Commission shall be an expert panel composed of not more than 13 members appointed by the President, drawn from the fields of bioethics, science, medicine, technology, engineering, law, philosophy, theology, or other areas of the humanities or social sciences, at least one and not more than three of whom may be bioethicists or scientists drawn from the executive branch, as designated by the President.

(b) The President shall designate a Chair and Vice Chair from among the members of the Commission. The Chair shall convene and preside at meetings of the Commission, determine its agenda, and direct its work. The Vice Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair in the absence or disability of the Chair and shall perform such other functions as the Chair may from time to time assign.

(c) Members shall serve for a term of 2 years and shall be eligible for reappointment. Members may continue to serve after the expiration of their terms until the appointment of a successor.

*Sec. 4. Administration.*

(a) The Department of Health and Human Services shall provide funding and administrative support for the Commission to the extent permitted by law and within existing appropriations.

(b) All executive departments and agencies and all entities within the Executive Office of the President shall provide information and assistance to the Commission as the Chair may request for purposes of carrying out the Commission's functions, to the extent permitted by law.

(c) The Commission shall have a staff headed by an Executive Director, who shall be appointed by the Secretary of Health and Human Services in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair.

(d) Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation, but shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by law for persons serving intermittently in Government service (5 U.S.C. 5701–5707), consistent with the availability of funds.

*Sec. 5. Termination.* The Commission shall terminate 2 years after the date of this order unless extended by the President.

*Sec. 6. General Provisions.*

(a) This order supersedes Executive Order 13237 of November 28, 2001.

(b) Insofar as the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. App.), may apply to the Commission, any functions of the President under that Act, except that of reporting to the Congress, shall be performed by the Secretary of Health and Human Services in accordance with the guidelines that have been issued by the Administrator of General Services.

(c) Nothing in this order shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

- (i) authority granted by law to an executive department, agency, or the head thereof;
- or

(ii) functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(d) This order shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(e) This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,  
November 24, 2009.

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NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on November 30.

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