
Baby Doe Rules Issued

A new version of the controversial "Baby Doe" regulations has finally been issued by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The rules, which are based on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, are designed to protect the rights of defective newborns. They basically shift away from the earlier emphasis on federal intervention. Instead, they encourage hospitals to set up "infant care review committees" to be the first resort when inappropriate treatment is suspected. State child protective agencies are designated as backup resources, and HHS is only to be brought in as a last resort.

Medical groups are particularly pleased with the emphasis on review committees. But they—particularly the American Medical Association—continue to object to the application of Section 504 to complex medical decisions.

Advocates for the handicapped applaud the prominent role given child protective agencies, but fear that the review committees will be rubber stamps for doctors' decisions.

—CONSTANCE HOLDEN

Dole Promotes Patent Reform for Big Business

About a decade ago, the federal government concluded it was not a very good broker of patents and decided to assign patent rights for federally funded research to universities, nonprofit institutions, and small businesses. Under this arrangement, patents are more likely to be exploited, the government reasoned. Now Senator Robert J. Dole (R-Kans.) wants to give large businesses the same rights and has introduced a bill to do that. Hearings on the bill are to be held in mid-February.

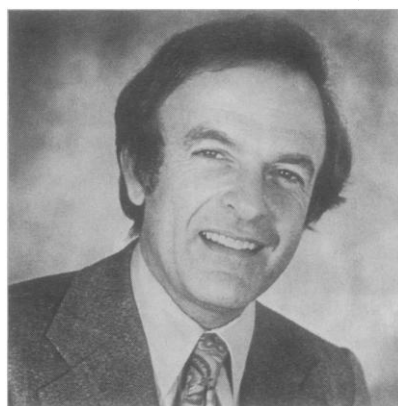
The bill is likely to draw opposition on the grounds that the fruits of federally funded research should remain in the public domain. But given the current political environment and the success of the university-government arrangement, opposition to the proposal is not likely to be very persuasive.

An aide to Dole says that the "burden of proof is on the other side."

According to the aide, 90 percent of the patents held by the government are never developed.—MARJORIE SUN

Ottinger, Nuclear Gadfly, to Quit Congress in 1984

Representative Richard L. Ottinger (D-N.Y.), an advocate of government-backed solar and energy conservation projects, surprised followers with his announcement on 6 January that he will be leaving Congress at the end of the term this fall. Ottinger, 54, is now serving his 16th year in Congress and is chairman of the conservation and power subcommittee of the House



Energy and Commerce Committee. A Democrat in a heavily Republican district, he has faced increasingly difficult election battles.

Ottinger decided to quit while "at the top of form and still young enough to start another career," he told his constituents in Westchester County. He has grown tired of 7-day work weeks and of the "incredible frustration of being in Congress and still feeling as powerless as the average citizen to affect the great issues before the country, like war and peace." He said, "I have long wanted to teach and write."

Ottinger led the House opposition to proposed cuts in the solar R & D budget in 1981 and 1982 and played an important role in the vote to end funding for the Clinch River breeder reactor. More recently, he has challenged the Administration's plans for a \$10-billion gas centrifuge uranium enrichment plant in Portsmouth, Ohio (*Science*, 11 November 1983, p. 591).

—ELIOT MARSHALL

DOE Warned on Plans for Restarting Reactor

The Department of Energy's plans to restart an aged weapons reactor in South Carolina have come under surprisingly hostile fire from two other government agencies. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of the Interior have each concluded that the restart could have serious environmental impacts, and Interior has even threatened to appeal to the White House Council on Environmental Quality if DOE does not make some costly modifications to the reactor.

DOE wants to restart the reactor, which has been mothballed since the late 1960's, to produce plutonium for use in nuclear weapons. It originally planned to start it up in October, after spending some \$200 million on repairs and refurbishment. But in July Congress told DOE to produce a formal statement about the plant's impact on the environment before going ahead (*Science*, 22 July, p. 345). The negative assessments by EPA and Interior, which were made in comments on a draft of DOE's environmental impact statement, could add further delays.

The reaction to the draft environmental impact statement has already caused DOE to miss its deadline for publication of a final version. The department received 97 written comments, including those of EPA and Interior, and 47 oral statements at public hearings. As a result, the final impact statement, which was originally due in December, will now not be ready for several weeks.

EPA and Interior both argued that the reactor, which will produce plutonium for use in nuclear weapons, will destroy extensive wetlands near the plant by discharging hot water directly into a creek. They also contend that DOE has failed to produce sufficient assurance that the reactor operations will not contaminate ground water in the area. And finally, EPA has warned that the planned disposal of some hazardous wastes from the plant may violate federal toxic waste laws.

Interior said it could not support direct discharge of cooling water into the environment, and recommended that cooling towers be installed at the