

Reagan Library Topic Guide – Infanticide and Handicapped Infants

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White House Office of Records Management (WHORM) [Subject Files](#)

White House Office of Records Management (WHORM) [Alphabetical Files](#).

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INFANTICIDE RE: HANDICAPPED INFANTS

HISTORICAL NOTE

In the early 1980's, infanticide became a widely debated issue regarding possible euthanasia cases involving handicapped infants.

Two prominent cases highlighted the lack of standard procedures for treating seriously handicapped and ill newborn infants. In 1982, "Baby Doe" was born in Bloomington, Indiana with Down's syndrome. Baby Doe reportedly died after the parents chose to forgo standard medical treatment for the baby's birth defects.

Similarly, in New York City in 1983, "Baby Jane Doe" was born with spina bifida and it was believed surgical treatment would result in her living with permanent brain damage and other health concerns. The parents opted not to have the surgery. The Department of Health and Human Services ultimately referred the case to New York's Child Protective Services after it felt that surgery posed no extra risk to the child.

In both of these cases, the Department of Health and Human Services and Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop believed that the infants were being discriminated against due to their mental handicaps, resulting in their deaths. Dr. Koop began advocating for a law that would ensure standard practices and procedures for treating seriously ill and mentally handicapped newborns, even if it ran counter to the preferences of the parents. This led to passage of the Child Abuse Amendments of 1984 which established specific criteria and guidelines for the treatment of sick and disabled newborn infants. The amendment was passed in October 1984.

WHORM SUBJECT FILE

[FI004](#) casefile 079117

[HE001-05](#) casefiles 044463, 077191, 089177

[SP776](#) casefile 073424

[WE001](#) casefile 074660

[WE001-01](#) casefiles 073408, 076775

[WE008](#) casefile 075556

WHITE HOUSE STAFF AND OFFICE FILES

CABINET AFFAIRS, OFFICE OF

Dunlop, Becky Norton: Files

Box 7

[Handicapped Infants – Infanticide Issues] (1)(2)

Infanticide (1)(2)

COMMUNICATIONS, OFFICE OF

Maseng, Mari: Files

Box 4

Fetal Research

POLICY DEVELOPMENT, OFFICE OF

Carleson, Robert B.: Files

OA 9594

Handicapped (1)(2)

Infanticide (1)-(5)

[Infanticide] Bloomington Baby

Galebach, Stephen H.: Files

OA 9105

Handicapped Infanticide

[Handicapped – Infanticide]

Handicapped Infanticide - 1982 Galebach (1)-(4)

Handicapped - Infanticide - HHS Investigations

OA 9106

Infanticide - Baby Jane Doe (1)-(4)

Infanticide - Clippings [and Correspondence] November 1983 [April 1983-May 1984]

(1)(2)

Infanticide Correspondence I

Infanticide – Drafts

Infanticide - HHS Investigations (1)-(3)

Infanticide – HHS Regulation January 1984 (1)-(4)

Infanticide - Information Packet

Infanticide Legislation - 1982 (1)(2)

Infanticide - Memos (1)-(6)

Infanticide - Memos 1982

Infanticide - Monographs

Infanticide - Oklahoma [Controversy re University of Oklahoma Health Services Center]

Infanticide - Pleadings (1)-(7)

Infanticide - Public Comment

Infanticide – Statement at Press Conference 03/18/1983

Infanticide - Working Group (1)-(4)

PUBLIC LIAISON, OFFICE OF

Anderson, Carl: Files
OA 16591
Infanticide

Bell, Mariam: Files
OA 17951
Fetal Experimentation

Blackwell, Morton
Box 2
[Baby Jane Doe \(1\)](#)
[Baby Jane Doe \(2\)](#)