Written by By Joey Peters NM Political Report
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Anti-abortion advocates from across the country held a press conference in Albuquerque Wednesday morning denouncing New Mexico's flagship university for its fetal tissue donation practices. Among those who spoke at the event were Rep. Marsha Blackburn, R-Tennessee, New Mexico Rep. Steve Pearce, a Republican and Washington D.C. attorney Catherine Glenn Foster. Blackburn, who chaired the controversial congressional Select Panel on Infant Rights, said she came to "join my colleague in the House [of Representatives] and those in New Mexico that have worked on the issue of life."

The Select Panel released a report in January faulting the University of New Mexico for lacking protocols to "ensure the survival of infants who show signs of life following extraction from the uterus." It also scrutinized UNM's relationship with Southwest Women's Options, an abortion provider that has donated fetal tissue to the university for scientific research. Supporters of abortion rights, as well as minority Democrats in the Select Panel, have dismissed the report and the panel's investigation for using "McCarthy-era tactics" to conduct "an end-to-end attack on fetal tissue donation and women's health care."

Pearce contended that "the laws are clear" and that "we're simply stating, 'Do not violate the law.'"

The Select Panel made 15 criminal referrals for its research of abortion providers and educational institutions across the country, including to New Mexico Attorney General Hector Balderas.

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