

THE CASE AGAINST GERMLINE MODIFICATION

GERMLINE MODIFICATION IS EXTREMELY CONTROVERSIAL



Puts women and people who would carry modified fetuses at risk



Has the potential to increase social inequality and usher in a new eugenics



Poses harm to the resulting children and future generations

Germline modification means changing the DNA of human embryos, eggs, or sperm; these changes would be passed down to all future generations. The FDA cannot currently approve clinical germline trials, but no US laws explicitly prohibit germline modification.

ALLOWING GERMLINE MODIFICATION WOULD:

- Create new forms of population control by reinforcing the notion that some groups are more “fit” to reproduce than others
- Promote beliefs that parents are responsible for ensuring their children don’t have “undesirable” genes or traits
- Exacerbate existing inequalities and discrimination by encouraging parents who can afford it to “design” their children
- Pressure pregnant women and people to abort fetuses with genetic conditions

WHAT ROLE CAN THE REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE MOVEMENT PLAY?



Emphasize the links between germline modification, reproduction, and oppressive systems and assumptions



Highlight health concerns for those who would carry genetically modified fetuses and for future generations of genetically modified children



Hold political, economic, and social leaders accountable for addressing inequities rather than permitting technologies that would likely exacerbate them



Oppose attempts to position women’s bodies as the primary source of irreversible changes that would affect future generations

Public discussions regarding health, social and ethical implications of germline modification must consider the context of historical and contemporary attempts to control the reproductive lives of women, trans, and nonbinary people. Reproductive justice’s focus on systems and structures of oppression uniquely positions us to recognize the dangers of germline modification.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [GENETICSANDSOCIETY.ORG](https://geneticsandsociety.org)

