

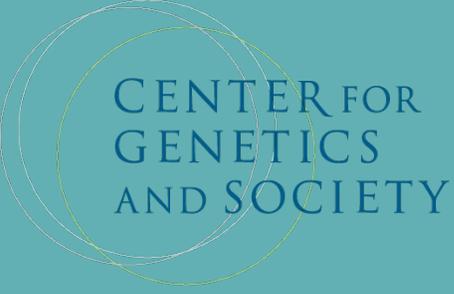


# BioPolitical

## News&Views

January 22, 2021

### SPOTLIGHT

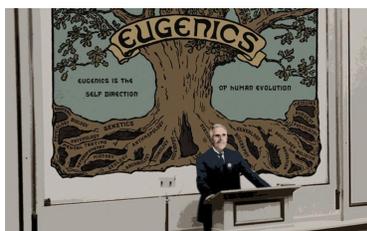


**Heritable Human Genome Editing: Political Implications and Opportunities for Leadership**

The United States can lead the way in encouraging development of gene therapies for existing patients while forestalling heritable genome editing.

[Read CGS' memo to the new administration.](#)

### ANNOUNCEMENTS



#### Upcoming at the San Francisco Asian Art Museum: *A Dangerous Idea: Eugenics in America*

On February 25, CGS executive director Marcy Darnovsky, CGS senior fellow Osagie Obasogie, and filmmaker Stephanie Welch will discuss the history of eugenics in the US and the meanings, uses, and misuses of genetic science. The online workshop will feature clips from *A Dangerous Idea* and discussion. Purchase tickets (\$5 general public/free for museum members) [here](#).

### COMMENTARY



#### Biden's Science Appointments

**Pete Shanks**, *Biopolitical Times* | 01.20.2021

The Biden-Harris Administration is sure to have a very different approach to science policy than its predecessor. Among President Biden's recent science appointments or nominations are three of particular interest to those of us concerned about the social implications of heritable human genome editing.



## What is US Policy on Heritable Genome Editing? What's Expected in the New Administration?

[Pete Shanks](#), *Biopolitical Times* | 01.20.2021

CGS will continue to track, and hope to influence, US policy developments related to heritable genome editing. Here, we share some recent commentaries and press statements about this topic.

## CGS IN THE NEWS



### CRISPR: What is the future of gene editing?

[Start Here](#), Al Jazeera | 01.11.2021

*Start Here* takes a look at the basics of CRISPR gene editing and the debates around heritable human genome editing, with commentary from CGS' Katie Hasson.

## WHAT WE'RE READING

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION | RACE & EUGENICS | ASSISTED REPRODUCTION |  
TWIN STUDIES | MARKET WATCH

### BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

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#### Biden says his advisers will lead with 'science and truth'

[Bill Barrow and Seth Borenstein](#), *AP* | 01.16.2021

Biden is elevating the position of science adviser to Cabinet level, a White House first, and nominating Eric Lander to be director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy. Other notable appointments include Francis Collins, who will continue as director of the National Institutes of Health, and Alondra Nelson, a social scientist who studies science, technology and social inequality, who will be deputy science policy chief.

### RACE AND EUGENICS

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#### Race and Biology

[Beth Baker](#), *BioScience* | 01.15.2021

White supremacists continue to misinterpret genetics to try to bolster their views, and geneticists are starting to confront their responsibility to counter racist science. It remains important to recognize that scientists occupy "one seat of many at the antiracist table."

#### Forcibly sterilized for being Afro-German 'children of shame'

[Brenda Haas](#), *Deutsche Welle* | 01.09.2021

Starting in 1937, healthy German children were forcibly sterilized because of their "mixed" parentage. A *DW* documentary sheds light on their fate.

#### California needs to repair the damage from its history of systematic sterilizations

[Janelli Vallin](#), *Cal Matters* | 01.07.2021

In 2021, there will be an estimated 455 survivors of eugenic sterilizations and 244 survivors of prison sterilizations in California. Progressive states like California need to acknowledge the ways in which they've dishonored immigrant women's experiences, and rectify their wrongdoing. With the population of sterilization survivors aging, there is no time to wait.

## University College London apologises for role in promoting eugenics

[Richard Adams](#), *The Guardian* | 01.07.2021

University College London has expressed “deep regret” for its role in the propagation of eugenics, alongside a promise to improve conditions for disabled staff and students and a pledge to give “greater prominence” to teaching the malign legacy of the discredited movement.

## Boxes of sealed papers from an influential anti-immigrant activist have been stored at U of M for years. So what’s in them?

[Allison Donahue](#), *Michigan Advance* | 01.06.2021

According to the university’s library, the sealed boxes contain meeting minutes of anti-immigration and pro-eugenics organizations, and much more. They include the private correspondence of John Tanton, known as the founder of the modern anti-immigration movement, who also chaired Sierra Club’s National Population Committee and founded the Northern Michigan chapter of Planned Parenthood.

## ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

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### Private IVF clinics cost tens of thousands and people’s dreams

[Alice Clarke](#), *Sydney Morning Herald* | 01.11.2021

The two largest IVF clinics in Australia are either publicly traded or owned by publicly traded companies. The high prices charged for IVF services yield big profits for shareholders, while the surrogates and gamete providers who make these services possible get paid nothing.

### The Sperm Kings Have a Problem: Too Much Demand

[Nellie Bowles](#), *New York Times* | 01.08.2021

Many people want a pandemic baby, but some sperm banks are running low. So women are joining unregulated Facebook groups to find willing donors, no middleman required.

## TWIN STUDIES

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### Twins With Covid Help Scientists Untangle the Disease’s Genetic Roots

[Katherine J. Wu](#), *New York Times* | 01.18.2021

Some pairs of twins have very similar reactions to Covid, while others are affected very differently, to the surprise of their doctors. Researchers are investigating genetic influences on responses to the infection, partly by examining differences in the genetic makeup of identical twins.

### Identical twins aren’t perfect clones, research shows

[Christina Larson](#), *AP* | 01.07.2021

Scientists in Iceland sequenced DNA from 387 pairs of identical twins. On average, identical twins have 5.2 genetic differences, the researchers found. But about 15% of identical twin pairs have more, some of them up to 100.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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### Jumbled-up sentences show that AIs still don’t really understand language

[Will Douglas Heaven](#), *MIT Technology Review* | 01.12.2021

Sentences with opposite meanings—such as “Does marijuana cause cancer?” and “Does cancer cause marijuana?”—were analyzed as asking the same question. This error may be fixed easily, but it highlights how hard it is to make AIs that understand and reason like humans.

## MARKET WATCH

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### DARPA Awards \$36.7M to Six Organizations for Gene Editing-Based Dx,

## Biosurveillance Tech

Staff, *GenomeWeb* | 01.14.2021

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency has awarded a contract worth up to \$36.7 million to create diagnostic and biosurveillance systems, including a disposable, CRISPR-based, point-of-care device for the detection of at least 10 pathogens, and a massively multiplexed device for the detection of at least 1,000 targets.

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