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BioPolitical

News&Views

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SPOTLIGHT



A New Eugenics Gold Rush? From designer babies to not-quite-designer jeans

Katie Hasson, *Biopolitical Times* | 08.21.2025

From designer babies to designer(-ish) jeans, it seems we're now on the verge of a eugenics gold rush. A clear rejection of eugenic logics and strong regulation based in social justice values are needed to push back on companies attempting to cash in on "better babies" and a genetically engineered future.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



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Exciting changes at CGS

CGS is on the cusp of an exciting new chapter. After 13 intense, challenging, and deeply fulfilling years as executive director, **Marcy Darnovsky** will be retiring at the end of this month. **Katie Hasson**, currently CGS' associate director, will step into the executive director role on September 1. **Your support** will boost CGS' impact in this new era. Stay tuned for plans to celebrate Marcy's leadership and many contributions.

CGS IN THE NEWS

The quest to create gene-edited babies gets a reboot

Rob Stein, *NPR* | 08.06.2025

A new push from Silicon Valley investors on heritable genome editing



threatens a future where we "mass-produce genetically engineered human beings," warned CGS' Katie Hasson. "I'm very worried that all of this together means we're headed straight into a new era of high-tech, market-based eugenics."

COMMENTARY



GMWATCH

GMWatch on De-Extinction, Designer Babies, Gene Drives and More

Pete Shanks, *Biopolitical Times* | 08.21.2025

The latest review from *GMWatch* scrutinizes new biotech developments including gene drives, CRISPR babies, lab-grown sperm, and immortality projects. "What unites many of these is not just the massive gap between the myth making and the reality, but the immense financial and political leverage now propelling them forward."



New Guidelines on Trisomy 13 and 18 Promote Nuanced Care Decisions

Matteo Zumbano, *Biopolitical Times* | 08.13.2025

New guidelines from the American Academy for Pediatrics mark a welcome shift away from ableist assumptions about children with trisomy 13 and trisomy 18. The guidelines support individually tailored and accessible care and counseling for their families.

WHAT WE'RE READING

POLYGENIC EMBRYO SCREENING | GENE EDITING AND GENOMICS
IVG AND EMBRYO RESEARCH | EUGENICS | ASSISTED REPRODUCTION
US FEDERAL POLICY | SURROGACY 360 | VARIOUS

POLYGENIC EMBRYO SCREENING

Inside Silicon Valley's Obsession With High-IQ Babies

Zusha Elinson, *The Wall Street Journal* | 08.12.2025

Some Silicon Valley parents are increasingly enamored with technology that purports, without convincing evidence, to give them "smarter babies." Some are willing to pay upwards of \$50,000 for technologies that claim to screen embryos for IQ.

The Myth of the Designer Baby—Why 'Genetic Optimization' Is More Hype Than Science

Arthur Caplan and James Tabery, *Scientific American* | 07.28.2025

Nucleus Genomics' touting of its "genetic optimization" technology provoked ethical outcry and comparisons to GATTACA, but the company is more akin to Theranos – it's making unsubstantiated claims about polygenic risk scores that are not rooted in actual science.

GENE EDITING AND GENOMICS

We Don't Know if the Babies Born From Mitochondrial Replacement Therapy Will Still Develop Mitochondrial Disease

Katherine Drabiak, *Journal of Medical Ethics Forum* | 08.07.2025

Media coverage of children born from pronuclear genome transfer (sometimes called “mitochondrial donation”) celebrated that the children were born “healthy,” overlooking both present unknowns about the mitochondria in their organs and future risks that they may develop mitochondrial disease.

Blood taken from Danish babies ended up in huge genetic study—without consent

Annika Inampudi, *Science* | 08.01.2025

Ethics committees in Denmark allowed genetic data collected at birth from 150,000 Danish people born between 1981 and 2008 to be used in research studies on psychiatric disorders without those individuals' knowledge or consent. Now, they're being notified and given the chance to opt out of future research.

“CRISPR Meets GPT” to Supercharge Gene Editing

Kristel Tjandra, *Genetic Engineering & Biotechnology News* | 07.30.2025

“CRISPR-GPT” is an “AI agent” designed to interact with humans working on gene-editing. Researchers say the system can generate detailed protocols and troubleshoot potential errors. Some hope it will be a step toward fully automating gene editing. How far should “democratizing” gene editing go?

IVG AND EMBRYO RESEARCH

George Church's lab gets closer to creating human eggs in a dish, and a new startup plans to finish the job

Ryan Cross, *Endpoints News* | 08.19.2025

A recent graduate from George Church's lab has co-founded a startup, which has raised over \$2 million, to continue the lab's attempts at in vitro gametogenesis. They claim they'll “get to an egg in two years,” but other researchers foresee complex problems ahead — or a potential “dead end.”

If it's time to revisit the 14-day rule, it's also time to engage the public

Molly Gray, *Nuffield Council on Bioethics* | 08.13.2025

The Nuffield Council on Bioethics is conducting a major public dialogue to explore public views and priorities on potential changes to the 14-day rule on human embryo research.

Lab-grown embryo models are getting more realistic. Scientists are getting more concerned

Kate Hunt, *CNN* | 07.31.2025

A proposed update to research guidelines would advise scientists not to use human embryo models for ectogenesis — the development of an embryo outside the human body via the use of artificial wombs. Are voluntary guidelines sufficient?

EUGENICS

Baby Bonuses and Motherhood Medals: Why We Shouldn't Trust the Pronatalist Movement

National Women's Law Center | 08.13.2025

A new report published by the National Women's Law Center explores “the pronatalist movement, their history of eugenics and racism, the Trump administration's concerning ties to the movement, and what we should be doing instead to support women and families.”

Sydney Sweeney's 'Great Jeans' Illuminate the Dangerous Resurgence of Eugenics

Tania Fabo, *Newsweek* | 08.06.2025

It was no accident that American Eagle's recent ad campaign featured Sydney Sweeney, a blonde, blue-eyed, able-bodied all-American girl. It was about embracing the resurgence of eugenics in US politics by having the eugenic ideal of "good genes" wearing "good jeans."

Diagnosing Bias: Eugenics and the American Eagle Jeans Campaign

Sayantani DasGupta, *MedPage Today* | 08.05.2025

Ads don't just sell products; they sell values. American Eagle's ad campaign isn't just selling jeans, it's also selling eugenics, race, and genetic determinism.

The Rise of Silicon Valley's Techno-Religion

Cade Metz, *The New York Times* | 08.04.2025

Silicon Valley's "Rationalists," closely connected to effective altruism and artificial intelligence gambits, operate as a fundamentalist techno-religion, convincing adherents to "ignore their common sense about problems in the here and now in order to focus their attention on some fantastical future."

Genetics & the American Far Right: A conversation with Alexandra Minna Stern, PhD

Susanna Smith, *Genetic Frontiers* | 07.28.2025

On the Genetic Frontiers podcast, historian (and CGS Advisory Board member) Alexandra Minna Stern identifies alarming parallels between the early 20th-century eugenics movement and the far right's embrace of eugenics, pronatalism, and techno-utopian ideas today.

ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

World's 'oldest baby': what a 30-year-old embryo tells us about the future of fertility

Nicky Hudson, *The Conversation* | 08.12.2025

The birth of the "world's oldest baby" from a 30-year-old frozen embryo shows how reproductive technologies are changing societal assumptions about identity, genetics, family, and time – and the need for regulations to help manage these significant shifts.

UK Parliamentary office calls for submissions on surrogacy

Harry Hunter, *PET BioNews* | 08.11.2025

The UK Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology announced plans to publish a POSTnote – a briefing document for members of Parliament – based in part on stakeholder submissions on surrogacy law in the UK and internationally. It might put surrogacy reform back on the legislative agenda after earlier attempts appeared to stall.

The Mystery of the L.A. Mansion Filled With Surrogate Children

Katherine Long, Ben Foldy, and Sara Randazzo, *The Wall Street Journal* | 08.05.2025

A Chinese couple in Los Angeles is under investigation after they were found to have more than 20 children – all born through surrogacy over the course of a few years. In addition to examining the couple's motivations, police are investigating allegations of child abuse and potential links to clients in China.

US FEDERAL POLICY

Editorial: Cancelling mRNA studies is the highest irresponsibility

Nature | 08.15.2025

With the federal government's recently announced decision to terminate grants funding mRNA

vaccine research, the implications of RFK Jr.'s dangerous and unfounded vaccine skepticism have become global and long-term.

A little-known approach to infertility is complicating the White House's IVF push

Aria Bendix, *NBC News* | 08.08.2025

With Trump's support for IVF fizzling, conservative anti-abortion groups and MAHA fans hope he'll fund "restorative reproductive medicine" instead. The approach purports to use scientifically based techniques to treat underlying causes of infertility, but it's often attached to anti-abortion, anti-IVF sentiments.

Stem Cells, the NFL, and RFK Jr. -- What Doctors Need to Know

Gregory Laub and Hannah Glaser, *MedPage Today* | 08.07.2025

Professor of health policy and bioethicist Leigh Turner explains how professional athletes' use and promotion of experimental stem cell treatments lend credibility to unproven, often risky procedures – a concerning trend in a political climate encouraging deregulation.

White House has no plan to mandate IVF care, despite campaign pledge

Riley Beggin and Jeff Stein, *The Washington Post* | 08.03.2025

Despite Trump's campaign pledge and executive order promising to expand IVF access, recent reporting suggests that the White House will not make health insurers provide coverage for IVF. The administration is considering other strategies to boost access, but internal disagreements about IVF and federal family policy are far from resolved.

FDA's New Drug Approval AI Is Generating Fake Studies: Report

Matt Novak, *Gizmodo* | 07.23.2025

RFK Jr. is pushing Health and Human Services agencies to use AI, but the perils of this approach are becoming clear. The FDA's AI tool "Elsa" is making up nonexistent studies and misrepresenting research, according to FDA employees.

SURROGACY 360



40 Years of the Surrogacy Arrangements Act: What Next for Surrogacy?

Megan Freeman, *PET BioNews* | 07.28.2025

An online event held by Progress Educational Trust brought together six speakers, including a surrogate, an intended parent, and surrogacy researchers and lawyers, to discuss changes in surrogacy in the UK since the Surrogacy Arrangements Act came into effect 40 years ago.

VARIOUS

GMWatch publishes historic recordings of scientist Arpad Pusztai

GMWatch | 08.08.2025

GMWatch has published a series of interviews conducted in March 2002 with the late scientist Dr. Arpad Pusztai. He describes the results of – and the political fallout from – his landmark 1999 study that found GM insecticidal potatoes had toxic effects on rats.

This company claimed to 'de-extinct' dire wolves. Then the fighting started

Ewen Callaway, *Nature* | 08.04.2025

Researchers and conservationists have made their skepticism about – or outright rejection of – Colossal Biosciences' de-extinction claims clear. The company's combative responses to critiques undermine their repeated reassurances of respect for scientific research and scrutiny.

If you've read this far, you clearly care about the fight to reclaim human biotechnologies for the common good. Thank you!

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