



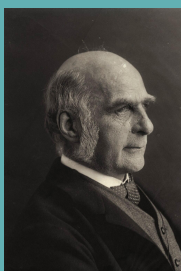
CENTER FOR  
GENETICS  
AND SOCIETY

# BioPolitical

## News&Views

September 26, 2025

## SPOTLIGHT



### Eugenics, from Victorian to Postmodern

Pete Shanks, *Biopolitical Times* | 09.24.2025

Genomics companies selling polygenic prediction of children's futures would almost certainly disavow eugenic commitments to "race betterment" and racial hierarchies. But by pitching IVF, genetic testing, and embryo selection as good investments for families and the nation, they carry forward early eugenicists' assertions that "better babies" are a civic responsibility.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



### Welcome, Maimouna!

CGS is excited to welcome Maimouna Toliver as our new Project and Administrative Coordinator for the Confronting Eugenics initiative. Maimouna is a learning, culture, and organizational development leader with over 15 years of experience promoting equity and belonging in global mission-driven organizations, where her work has taken her to East and West Africa. She holds master's degrees in public health and international affairs and development. Born in Niger and raised in West Africa, she now lives in Atlanta, GA.

### Reproductive Justice Futurisms Think Tank: Videos now Available

Videos from the March 2025 Reproductive Justice Futurisms Think Tank convening are now available. Organized by [Loretta Ross](#) and [Jallicia Jolly](#), the gathering at Smith College addressed how reproductive justice frameworks can respond to new eugenic applications of reproductive and genetic technologies and explored alternative reproductive futures. Look for CGS Executive Director [Katie Hasson](#) (Plenary 3) and CGS consultant [Emily Galpern](#) (Plenary 1), plus CGS Advisory Board Members [Dorothy](#)



Roberts and Lisa Ikemoto, and numerous CGS colleagues.

## COMMENTARY



### Can Trump's IVF Policies Please His Pronatalist Base?

**Emma McDonald Kennedy**, *Biopolitical Times* | 09.25.2025

It may be impossible to please all the pronatalists in the Trump base at once. Silicon Valley types embrace IVF and polygenic risk scores, while Christian conservatives reject IVF altogether in favor of “restorative reproductive medicine.” The debate’s focus on expanding IVF or dismantling access to it entirely sidelines important questions about how IVF should be regulated.

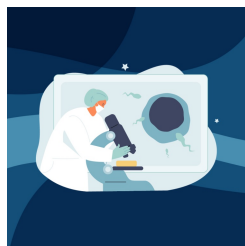


### Chimeras: The Genetic Modification of Nature

**Pete Shanks**, *Biopolitical Times* | 09.25.2025

A new *GeneWatch UK* briefing for the upcoming International Union for Conservation of Nature Congress makes it clear: “Genetically modifying nature is not conservation and risks undermining the very concept of conservation in itself.” Companies promoting the practice have financial incentives to do so and make misleading claims.

## CGS IN THE NEWS



### Gestript van zorgen, gêne en pijn

**Marianne Lamers**, *NEMO Kennislink* | 09.23.2025

The health, safety, and experiences of women are often left out in discussions of IVF and other reproductive technologies. This has significant implications for considerations of heritable genome editing, says CGS’ Katie Hasson.



### Optimiser génétiquement ses enfants: les ambitions inquiétantes des startups de la fertilité

**Auriane Polge**, *Science & Vie* | 09.19.2025

U.S. startups are scaling up embryo selection offerings by convincing prospective parents that polygenic risk scores and proprietary algorithms can identify their “best” IVF embryos. CGS Executive Director Katie Hasson warns that the move toward “early genetic optimization” confuses care and social selection.

## GENE EDITING

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### Gene editing is being sold on the promise of healthier babies — but what are the ethical concerns?

[Charmayne Allison](#), *ABC News* | 09.21.2025

From He Jiankui's recently announced return to gene editing to Julian Savulescu's vocal support for "polygenic editing," some researchers and philosophers seem intent on trying to push heritable genome editing forward despite global consensus against it.

### Who decides the future of humanity? SA's genome editing guidelines spark global concern

[Vuyile Madwantsi](#), *Independent Online* | 08.22.2025

South Africa's National Health Research Ethics Council has removed a controversial section on heritable human genome editing from their new research ethics guidelines. The change demonstrates the importance of "pressing pause" and allowing for further public engagement, more research, and deeper conversations on gene editing.

## GENOMICS

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### US border patrol collected DNA from thousands of US citizens for years, data shows

[Johana Bhuiyan](#), *The Guardian* | 09.23.2025

Customs and Border Patrol agents took DNA samples from about 2,000 US citizens and shared them with the FBI for storage in a database used for criminal investigations, according to a new report from Georgetown. The report calls the practice a "flagrant abuse of power" with no legal justification.

### An ELSI for AI: Learning from genetics to govern algorithms

[Alondra Nelson](#), *Science* | 09.11.2025

The history of ELSI demonstrates that systematic ethical oversight strengthens rather than constrains beneficial innovation. AI development now stands at a similar inflection point, but with higher stakes and faster timelines.

### The precarious future of consumer genetic privacy

[Natalie Ram et al.](#), *Science* | 09.11.2025

The 23andMe bankruptcy saga made it clear that current laws fail to adequately protect consumers from the sale and misuse of their genetic data. Lawmakers' proposals for reform do not do enough to strengthen genetic privacy.

## GENE THERAPY

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### These Patients Got the Cure. Then It Went Away.

[Gina Kolata](#), *The New York Times* | 09.22.2025

Drug companies often discard gene therapies for rare diseases even after successful clinical trials

because of the high costs of developing treatments and getting regulatory approval. Some researchers and companies want the FDA to adopt a more flexible approach that involves conditional approval for rare-disease gene therapies.

## **Science history: A tragic gene therapy death that stalled the field for a decade — Sept. 17, 1999**

**Tia Ghose**, *Live Science* | 09.16.2025

Jesse Gelsinger's death from an experimental gene therapy 26 years ago revealed serious misconduct in gene therapy experiments, leading to lawsuits, reviews, and significant changes in how gene therapy trials are conducted.

## **Opinion: Gene Therapy Should Not Be a Luxury**

**Dennis Sponer**, *BioSpace* | 09.03.2025

New gene therapies clash with old models of insurance and reimbursement—and patients are paying the price. The US healthcare financial infrastructure can catch up to new gene therapies by treating (and funding) them as essential, lifesaving treatments, not luxuries.

## **EUGENICS**

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### **With Sobs and Doubts, Greenlandic Women Receive Apology for Forced Contraception**

**Jeffrey Gettleman and Maya Tekeli**, *The New York Times* | 09.24.2025

This week, the Danish PM apologized in person to survivors of Denmark's decades-long campaign to implant contraception devices in Indigenous Greenlandic women and girls without their knowledge or consent. Survivors criticized the government for taking decades to apologize and questioned its sincerity, given Trump's recent interest in annexing Greenland.

### **Disgust, Horror, and “Elimination”: Trump and RFK Jr.’s Eugenicist Autism Conference**

**Julia Métraux**, *Mother Jones* | 09.23.2025

Trump's obsession with eugenics and history of ableist statements set the tone for his press conference on autism. Trump, RFK Jr., and their allies framed autism as something to eliminate, rejected the idea of autistic self-advocacy, and excluded the voices of autistic people.

### **Meet the 25-year-old founder bringing designer babies to a clinic near you**

**Margaux MacColl**, *The San Francisco Standard* | 09.17.2025

Nucleus Genomics' founder says its polygenic risk predictions bring “genetic optimization” to IVF, despite scientific critiques of the accuracy of such techniques and ethical concerns about the eugenic implications of genetic selection.

### **The group behind Project 2025 wants a ‘Manhattan Project’ for more babies**

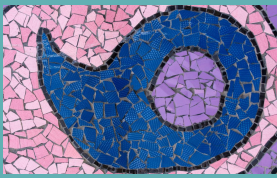
**Jacob Bogage**, *The Washington Post* | 09.03.2025

The Heritage Foundation is urging Trump to use executive orders to institute pronatalist policies that encourage married heterosexual couples to have more children. Unlike Silicon Valley pronatalists, the group rejects “extraordinary technical solutions,” including egg freezing subsidies, IVF, surrogacy, and genetic screening, as leading to a world of “custom lab-created babies on demand.”

### **The strangest members of Trump’s inner circle have more power than they’ve ever had before**

**Holly Baxter**, *The Independent* | 08.19.2025

Simone Collins, a prominent pronatalist with ties to tech elites and the far right, drafted (with the help of AI) an executive order that pitched pronatalist policies, including the much-discussed “motherhood medals,” to the Trump administration.



## What protections are in place during surrogacy?

Robin Young, *WBUR* | 09.17.2025

A recent viral story of an intended parent's attempts to punish a surrogate who had a stillbirth demonstrates how the industry and its lack of regulations leave surrogates vulnerable when complications arise.

## ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

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### IVF Disrupted: The Kindbody Story

Jackie Davalos, *Bloomberg* | 09.15.2025

The fertility company Kindbody's tech startup approach and aggressive growth model led to millions in venture capital and private equity funding, but it came at the cost of good patient care. A new investigative series digs into the unregulated fertility industry and shows what went wrong in Kindbody clinics.

### Neurodivergent gamete donors should not be automatically excluded

Dorian Accoe, *BioNews* | 09.15.2025

By excluding potential gamete donors who are neurodivergent or have a family history of neurodivergence, fertility clinics and gamete banks reinforce societal assumptions that neurodivergence is a deficiency rather than a difference.

### NICE publishes draft update to Fertility Guideline

Georgia Brice, *BioNews* | 09.15.2025

In a proposed update to its guidelines, the UK's National Institute for Health and Care Excellence retains its recommendation of three NHS-funded IVF cycles for those eligible under 40 and critiques unproven IVF add-ons. The draft is open for consultation until October 21.

### 99% of donor sperm rated 'high risk' of potential mix-ups at Queensland fertility giant

Grace Tobin and Kirsten Robb, *ABC News* | 09.01.2025

A secret audit of the Queensland Fertility Group, a major fertility clinic in Australia, revealed that 99% of its donor sperm frozen before 2020 was at "high risk" of not being from the person on the label.

### IVF clinic Queensland Fertility Group silenced white couple who gave birth to biracial baby in sperm mix-up

Grace Tobin and Kirsten Robb, *ABC News* | 08.31.2025

An Australian IVF clinic's sperm bank partner did not perform crucial checks to match the sperm donor with their sample, which led to a couple having a child from an embryo made with the wrong donor's sperm. The clinic then concealed the incident and made the couple sign an NDA, which barred them from publicly discussing what happened.

### This 'natural' infertility treatment is backed by Maha. Is it the right's path to limiting IVF?

Carter Sherman, *The Guardian* | 08.23.2025

Top Republicans, rightwing organizations, and even White House officials have recently begun to rally behind "restorative reproductive medicine" as an alternative to IVF that purports to treat the "root causes" of infertility.

## ANIMAL TECHNOLOGIES

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How gene editing is changing the meat in our diet, from fast-growing fish to heat-



## tolerant cows

[Peter de Kruijff](#), *ABC News* | 09.16.2025

In the past six years, several gene-edited animals have been approved for consumption in Japan, the US and several South American countries. Similar meat products could soon be sold in Australia without extensive regulatory testing or labels indicating what DNA alterations have been made.

## Scientists Perform First Pig-to-Human Lung Transplant

[Roni Caryn Rabin](#), *The New York Times* | 08.25.2025

Chinese scientists transplanted a gene-edited pig lung into a brain-dead man, but the experiment did not show whether the lung could sustain life on its own. Researchers emphasize that gene edits and animal organs only intensify the challenges of already tricky lung transplants.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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### AI extremists are peddling science fiction

[Aaron Ginn](#), *The Washington Post* | 09.12.2025

Critiques of AI doomers (and zealots) point to a false assumption behind this binary: that human intelligence, and now AI intelligence, is single, linear and measurable.

### A.I.'s Prophet of Doom Wants to Shut It All Down

[Kevin Roose](#), *The New York Times* | 09.12.2025

Eliezer Yudkowsky, a prominent Silicon Valley techno-rationalist and "AI doomer," has been warning of the "doomsday" possibilities of AI for decades. His new book predicts the death of humanity due to AI, which he hopes can be prevented with an "effective international treaty shutting AI down."

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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