



BioPolitical

News&Views

December 18, 2025

This final newsletter of 2025 highlights the impact that CGS is making with **your support**, from pushing back against embryo editing startups on *KQED Forum* to launching our new anti-eugenics network. You'll also find the insightful commentary and curated news that keeps you up-to-date on fast-moving developments in human biotechnologies.

Your donation to CGS directly supports this newsletter and our fight for a just and inclusive future.

Will you make a gift today and help CGS raise \$25,000 by the end of the year?

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SPOTLIGHT



Bay Area Startups Want to Make Genetically Engineered Babies. What Could Go Wrong?

KQED Forum | 12.02.2025

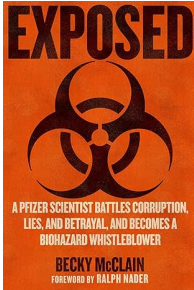
When it comes to genetic engineering of children, the biggest risk in terms of inequality isn't access, says CGS' Katie Hasson — it's the premise — that "there are people genetically superior to others and that you can achieve that through intervening in the genes... that idea is at the basis of eugenics."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Launching the Confronting Eugenics Network

This month, a stellar group of scholar-activists and advocates gathered online for the first meetings of the Confronting Eugenics Network, which forms the core of CGS' **Confronting Eugenics** initiative. Several key

COMMENTARY



Good Trouble: A Review of Exposed by Becky McClain

[Pete Shanks](#), *Biopolitical Times* | 12.18.2025

In a new memoir, Becky McClain details her fight to hold Pfizer accountable for their lax biosafety practices, which caused her exposure to a genetically engineered lentivirus and ongoing ill effects. McClain's recounting of Pfizer's attempts to silence her and quash efforts to improve biosafety highlights the urgent need for policy reform.

CGS IN THE NEWS



Tech titans lean into gene editing of embryos

The Dip Podcast | 12.02.2025

On the DW News podcast *The Dip*, CGS Executive Director [Katie Hasson](#) explains that one of the risks of allowing heritable genome editing is the “acceptance of the idea that certain children are genetically superior to others, even if it weren’t true. That idea, in and of itself, can be harmful in society, and we’ve seen that in the history of eugenics.”

WHAT WE'RE READING

HERITABLE GENOME EDITING | GENE THERAPY | EUGENICS
ASSISTED REPRODUCTION | VARIOUS

HERITABLE GENOME EDITING

Tech Titans Investing Millions to Create Genetically Engineered Babies

[Tina Stevens](#), *CounterPunch* | 12.11.2025

Silicon Valley elites’ “techno eugenics” hasten the arrival of bio-entrepreneurially created societies of genetic “haves and have-nots.” In this biotech dystopia, social inequalities will literally be embedded in our DNA.

Japan eyes ban on gene-edited babies

Japan Times | 12.04.2025

In response to concerns over “designer babies,” a government panel of experts in Japan approved a proposal to submit legislation that would ban the implantation of a genome-edited fertilized human egg.

A Golden State Research Sidestep: California's Stem Cell/Gene Therapy Agency Goes for \$207 Million More in Training

David Jensen, *The California Stem Cell Report* | 12.11.2025

California's stem cell and gene therapy agency approved spending \$207 million more on training and education, sidestepping the possibility of using the cash to directly support research that has been slashed and endangered by the Trump administration.

In a Honduran city, biotechs create gene therapy cocktails to fight aging

Frankie Fattorini, *Pharmaceutical Technology* | 12.02.2025

In Honduras, the charter city Próspera advertises lax regulations to attract biotech developers testing experimental treatments that the FDA would probably reject. Two companies have set up shop there, testing gene therapies to combat aging despite many scientists' skepticism.

Pioneering gene therapy for Hunter syndrome shows clinical success

Jenny Lange, *BioNews* | 12.01.2025

A toddler in the UK with the rare genetic condition Hunter syndrome was the first person to receive a new one-time gene therapy that, so far, appears to halt progression of the condition.

She Was Born Without an Immune System. Gene Therapy Saved Her Life.

Simar Bajaj, *The New York Times* | 11.27.2025

Experimental gene therapies for children with severe combined immunodeficiency or "bubble boy disease" have successfully restored the immune systems of over 50 children. Further trials are underway to assess the potential of gene therapies for other subtypes of the condition.

New Gene-Editing Strategy Could Help Development of Treatments for Rare Diseases

Pam Belluck and Carl Zimmer, *The New York Times* | 11.19.2025

A study tested "disease-agnostic" gene therapy in human cell models for four diseases, including cystic fibrosis and Tay-Sachs. Instead of fixing individual DNA mutations, prime-edited RNA ignores "nonsense mutations" and is able to build the full-length protein.

EUGENICS

"Have your best baby!": The genetics company promoting smart, tall babies

Josie Ensor, *The Times* | 12.09.2025

Nucleus Genomics recently plastered the New York City subway with ads urging prospective parents to "pick your best baby" using their \$30,000 "IVF+" polygenic embryo screening service.

UK IVF couples use legal loophole to rank embryos based on potential IQ, height and health

Hannah Devlin, *The Guardian* | 12.04.2025

Couples undergoing IVF in the UK are exploiting an apparent legal loophole to rank their embryos based on genetic predictions of IQ, height and health. They are sending "raw genetic data" on their embryos to US companies that offer polygenic screening – a controversial technique that UK clinics aren't allowed to offer.

Testing Embryos? How Far Should We Go?

Vardit Ravitsky, *The Hastings Center* | 12.04.2025

In a Hastings Center webinar on embryo testing, panelists discussed risks of embryo selection based on "desirable traits" and other ethical implications for parents, children, clinicians, and society.

Racism never went away – it simply changed shape

Lars Cornelissen, *The Conversation* | 11.28.2025

World War II delegitimized eugenics and other overtly racist belief systems in science and politics, but racism continued to thrive in a new form. Cultural racism, including anti-immigrant sentiments and policies, cloaked racism in concerns about national identity.

ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

They Answered an Ad for Surrogates, and Found Themselves in a Nightmare

Sarah A. Topol, *The New York Times Magazine* | 12.14.2025

Thai women recruited to be surrogates in Georgia had their passports taken and were stuck in rundown hotels, where they faced abuse and painful, unknown medical procedures. Some of the women escaped and are sharing their experiences, which make it clear how the lack of global regulation of surrogacy agencies and their practices leave surrogates vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

The Chinese Billionaires Having Dozens of U.S.-Born Babies Via Surrogate

Katherine Long, Ben Foldy, and Lingling Wei, *The Wall Street Journal* | 12.13.2025

A *Wall Street Journal* investigation revealed a “thriving mini-industry” within the US surrogacy industry. Agencies cater to elites and billionaires, who will pay millions in surrogacy fees to have large numbers of U.S.-born babies.

A Surrogacy Firm Told Parents-to-Be Their Money Was Safe. Suddenly, It Vanished.

Sarah Kliff, *The New York Times* | 12.10.2025

The surrogacy agency Surro Connections closed abruptly this month and is facing allegations of financial fraud. Surrogates have been left in the middle of pregnancies, and intended parents who gave the agency tens of thousands to pay surrogates have lost their funds. Limited government oversight of surrogacy agencies makes it difficult for surrogates and intended parents to evaluate agencies and their claims about handling of funds.

Mike Johnson strips military IVF coverage from defense bill – report

Carter Sherman, *The Guardian* | 12.08.2025

Speaker of the House and anti-abortion Republican Mike Johnson worked behind the scenes to remove a provision that would have provided healthcare coverage for IVF for active-duty members of the military from a defense policy bill since passed by the House.

WA's surrogacy and IVF laws overhauled as legislation passes state parliament

Courtney Withers and Daryna Zadvirna, *ABC News* | 12.03.2025

Newly passed legislation in Western Australia will allow same-sex couples, single people, transgender and intersex people to access assisted reproductive technology (ART) and surrogacy, almost a decade after reforms were first promised.

Failure to diagnose treatable male infertility leading to unnecessary IVF, experts say

Rachel Hall, *The Guardian* | 11.30.2025

Although male infertility accounts for 50% of all infertility cases, it is often left untreated in the UK due to a lack of understanding among healthcare providers, few specialists, and limited testing. Without testing and diagnosis, many couples needlessly go through IVF.

VARIOUS

Faking it without making it: The de-extinction disinfo campaign manager's history of hype

[Jonathan Matthews](#), *GMWatch* | 12.11.2025

Ben Lamm, co-founder of the “de-extinction” company Colossal Biosciences, has a history of hyping up “world-changing” ventures that ultimately lead nowhere. Cheerleading false techno-fixes like de-extinction in the media distracts from real attempts to address biodiversity loss and climate change.

FDA offers staff ‘agentic AI’ to support premarket reviews, administrative tasks

[Mario Aguilar](#), *Stat* | 12.01.2025

The FDA will give employees AI tools to use in premarket reviews, post-market inspections and compliance, and for other tasks despite the evidence that AI technology behaves unpredictably and “hallucinates” false information.

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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