

# BioPolitical

## News&Views

April 30, 2026

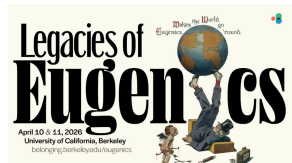
### SPOTLIGHT



#### Surrogacy in the United States: practices, costs, and regulations

A series of *Axios* articles on the patchwork of state-level surrogacy regulation in the United States cites maps created by the CGS project **Surrogacy360**. In **one of the articles**, CGS consultant Emily Galpern points out that surrogacy agency profit incentives and fertility clinic motivations both contribute to power imbalances in arrangements.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS



#### Legacies of Eugenics conference held April 10–11 at UC Berkeley

The conference, organized by Osagie Obasogie, Margaret Eby, and UC Berkeley's Othring and Belonging Institute, drew overflow crowds both days, reflecting strong public interest in this increasingly urgent topic. CGS Executive Director Katie Hasson and former ED Marcy Darnovsky spoke on a panel exploring Reproduction, Disability, and Gender, and several CGS Advisory Board members and colleagues participated as panelists or keynote speakers. Videos of the panels will be posted to the website.

#### Confronting Eugenics Workshop

Following the Legacies of Eugenics conference, CGS held the first in-person meeting of the Confronting Eugenics Network. 31 scholars and advocates, including many who presented at the conference, participated in sessions intended to build relationships, develop shared understanding and language about eugenics, and articulate a compelling vision of the future we want to build. Working groups on communications, public events, and resources for educators and advocates met to plan the next phases of the Network's efforts.

## CGS IN THE NEWS



### Ces start-up qui rêvent de créer des bébés génétiquement modifiés: “Le fantasme d’un humain amélioré, sans maladies, super-performant, super-intelligent”

**Alexandre Piquard**, *Le Monde* | 04.27.2026

U.S. biotech startups are trying to advance genetic modification of embryos, even though the technique is banned and threatens to bring back a form of eugenics. CGS Executive Director Katie Hasson points out that applying Silicon Valley’s “move fast and break things” approach to human reproduction, as these startups are eager to do, carries grave risks for future generations.



### Should We Use Gene Editing to Make Better Babies?

**John Donovan**, *WNYC and Open to Debate* | 04.23.2026

CGS’ Marcy Darnovsky weighs in on the perils of gene editing in this republished debate from 2022: “The perception that genetically modified children are biologically better than others would make the already obscene inequalities of our society much, much worse — and that is the likely consequence of societal attempts to create ‘better babies.’”

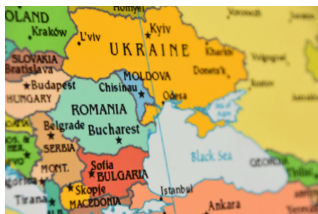


### “Tecnoeugenesia”, el plan dentro del movimiento neoconservador para aplicar ingeniería genética poblacional

**Miguel Muñoz**, *Cadena SER* | 04.08.2026

CGS’ Marcy Darnovsky emphasizes that Silicon Valley start-ups are practicing “techno-eugenics” (in Spanish, “technoeugenesia”) – in part through marketing IVF and genetic testing for the purpose of having the “best” children.

## COMMENTARY



### “I didn’t come here to get rich”: new research on the lives of Ukrainian women in Georgia’s surrogacy boom

**Olga Oleinikova, Medea Badashvili, and Polina Vlasenko**, *Biopolitical Times* | 04.23.2026

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has contributed to dramatic shifts in the surrogacy industry in the region. The upheaval has made nearby Georgia a popular alternative, but that shift has made surrogates even more vulnerable than before.

## WHAT WE’RE READING

## GENE EDITING

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### **Designer Baby Companies Are in Turmoil**

[Marcelo Jauregui-Volpe](#), *Wired* | 04.24.2026

Some Silicon Valley efforts to revive “designer babies” – despite serious ethical concerns and safety risks – appear to be flailing. Two companies launched in 2025 that aimed to advance gene editing of embryos have already shut down due to financial issues and internal conflict.

### **Creating Baby Geniuses to Thwart the AI Threat? (Yes, Really.)**

[Abby Vesoulis](#), *Mother Jones* | 04.18.2026

Silicon Valley scientists want to use heritable genome editing to create “superbabies” that they hope will be able to outsmart future “superintelligent” AI. In addition to violating existing bans on heritable genome editing and assuming scientific advances that are nowhere near realized, these efforts threaten to inaugurate a future of “genetic haves and have-nots,” reinforcing existing inequalities and dangerous eugenic ideas.

### **From Colossal to Chickens: The Scientists Behind Neion Bio’s Biologics Platform**

[Julianna LeMieux](#), *Genetic Engineering & Biotechnology News* | 04.14.2026

Scientists behind Colossal Biosciences’ efforts to “de-extinct” the dire wolf are now spearheading an effort to genetically engineer chickens in order to produce pharmaceutical drugs in the chickens’ eggs.

### **Inside the stealthy startup that pitched brainless human clones**

[Antonio Regalado](#), *MIT Technology Review* | 03.30.2026

The founder of the secretive startup R3 Bio, which has publicly pitched “organ sacks” as an alternative to animal testing, is still concealing his dream of developing “brainless human clones” that could provide backup organs or a backup body. Neither lack of evidence nor ethical risk seem to be stopping interest – and investment – from Silicon Valley longevity enthusiasts.

### **Fertility Inc.: The Embryo Editing Dinner**

[Ryan Knutson and Emily Glazer](#), *The Journal* | 03.27.2026

Silicon Valley titans and scientists gathered for an “embryo editing dinner” last summer in San Francisco – part of an under-the-radar attempt to advance genetic editing of embryos. Behind the scenes, Brian Armstrong and other tech elites attempting to make *Gattaca* a reality were strategizing about how to edit an embryo despite it being illegal in the U.S. Publicly, they claim to want to determine if such technology can be used “safely and responsibly.”

## GENE THERAPY AND GENOMICS

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### **J. Craig Venter, Scientist Who Decoded the Human Genome, Dies at 79**

[Nicholas Wade](#), *The New York Times* | 04.30.2026

The genomics researcher Craig Venter, who led a privately funded effort to sequence the human genome faster than the Human Genome Project, died on April 29. Known as a “risk-taker and intense competitor” with a big ego, Venter attracted controversy for his research on synthetic biology and longevity, as well as his embrace of commercialization in genetics.

### **The FDA gives the green light to the first gene therapy for deafness**

[Rob Stein](#), *NPR* | 04.23.2026

In response to a new gene therapy for deafness, Jaipreet Viridi emphasizes that these types of treatments run the risk of reinforcing the idea that deafness is “a problem in need of eradication, and that the only solution for disabled people to fully assimilate into society is through a medical intervention.”

## Regeneron wins FDA approval for first gene therapy for genetic hearing loss

[Sriparna Roy](#), *Reuters* | 04.23.2026

A gene therapy for otoferlin-related hearing loss was the first gene therapy approved as part of the FDA's new priority voucher program. It is the first gene therapy for genetic hearing loss to reach the market and will be available for free in the U.S.

## Personalized CRISPR therapies could soon reach thousands — here's how

[Fyodor D. Urnov and Sadik H. Kassim](#), *Nature* | 04.21.2026

The FDA's new plausible mechanism pathway could drop the timeline for FDA approval of gene therapies for rare disorders from four years to a few months, but other aspects of drug development and approval need to be addressed to keep the focus on safety and efficacy, in addition to speed.

## California-Financed Gene Therapy Scores Historic First Commercial Approval

[David Jensen](#), *California Stem Cell Report* | 03.27.2026

California's stem cell and gene therapy program announced that a gene therapy it funded will be available through Rocket Pharmaceuticals. It's the first CIRM-funded treatment that has made it to the public.

## SURROGACY360

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### Why Nigeria needs urgent surrogacy regulation

[Folawiyo Kareem Olajoku](#), *The Cable* | 04.24.2026

Longstanding issues of human trafficking and exploitation in Nigeria make the increasing use of surrogacy without regulation risky for surrogates and children born from these arrangements. Clear policies that regulate surrogacy, and a commission to develop and enforce such policies, could help orient surrogacy toward family building and away from exploitation.

## EUGENICS

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### Natural Election

[Jonathan Basile](#), *Los Angeles Review of Books* | 04.29.2026

The author of the controversial book *The Genetic Lottery*, Kathryn Paige Harden, has a new book out, in which she tries to make a progressive case for accepting genetic causes of criminality. Despite her protestations otherwise, her argument converges with the eugenicist ideals found on the far right and in Silicon Valley embryo-screening ventures.

### Sam Altman's Dangerous Singularity Delusions

[Emile P. Torres](#), *Truthdig* | 04.27.2026

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman's vision of "utopia" is actually a vision of human extinction. He has described a future in which humanity "merges" with superintelligent AI, abandoning biology for life as disembodied software.

### Eugenics and the Genetics Society

[Alex Aylward, Daniel J. Fairbanks, Maria Kiladi, and Gregory Radick](#), *Heredity* | 04.20.2026

Examining the legacies of past presidents of the UK Genetics Society shows how professional genetics organizations played a role in facilitating the rise of eugenics in the early twentieth century. It also emphasizes that these same groups have a responsibility to combat contemporary resurgences of eugenics.

### Indiana Eugenics

[Mary Hartnett](#), *WFYI* | 03.30.2026

After enacting the first eugenics sterilization law in 1907, Indiana's eugenics program resulted in the sterilization of more than 2,500 people over several decades. In a 5-part series, WFYI explores the history of Indiana's sterilization program, its discontinuation, and the new eugenics emerging in reproductive technologies.

## ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

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### **A Startup Says It Grew Human Sperm in a Lab—and Used It to Make Embryos**

**Emily Mullin**, *Wired* | 04.23.2026

A Utah startup claims that it successfully used stem cells from testicular tissue to grow mature sperm, which it then used to make “visibly healthy-looking embryos.” After further studies to test the technique's viability, the company wants to use it to treat male infertility.

### **Belgium strengthens oversight after sperm donor family limits breached**

**George Janes**, *BioNews* | 04.20.2026

After it was revealed that donor sperm with a cancer-causing mutation was used in clinics across Europe, Belgium is introducing new regulations to improve donor transparency, clinic oversight, and donor monitoring.

### **Investigation into IVF clinics in northern Cyprus after UK families given wrong sperm**

**Anna Collinson and Jo Adnitt**, *BBC* | 04.02.2026

The government in Northern Cyprus is investigating a fertility clinic after families who used the clinic discovered that their children were not genetically related to the sperm donor that they had selected for their IVF procedures.

### **Black women have worse IVF outcomes. New science helps explain why**

**Sarah Elizabeth Richards**, *Scientific American* | 04.02.2026

A new study suggests that egg quality and response to ovulation stimulation drugs are not the reasons why Black women experience lower rates of success with IVF. Social determinants of health, including medical racism and environmental injustices, could be contributing factors, which emphasizes the need to address structural inequities that impact reproduction.

## STEM CELLS

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### **Longevity Science Is Overhyped. But This Research Really Could Change Humanity.**

**Susan Dominus**, *The New York Times Magazine* | 04.27.2026

Cellular rejuvenation is attracting researchers' attention as a more viable direction for the longevity industry, which, supported by billionaires' investment in warding off aging, has veered into experimentation without much scientific evidence or concern for risk. Altos Labs, one of the startups trying to advance cellular rejuvenation, shows how the field risks overselling its research findings with seemingly limitless funding from Silicon Valley.

### **Developing an international framework for stem-cell-based embryo models**

**Alfonso Martinez Arias, Nicolas Rivron, and Naomi Moris**, *BioNews* | 04.20.2026

Researchers are proposing that an international regulatory framework be developed and adopted to govern stem-cell based embryo models. The framework would include ethical standards to oversee research and use of these models, along with stakeholder engagement and discussion.

### **Welcome to the Longevity Tourism Boom**

**Peter Ward**, *Slate* | 03.30.2026

Tourists from the U.S. and Canada are traveling to Panama, Honduras and other countries to get experimental, expensive, and unproven stem cell injections for “longevity.” Known stem-cell

enthusiast RFK Jr.'s leadership of the Department of Health and Human Services has made some hopeful that these risky treatments might become available in the U.S..

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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