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# BioPolitical

## News&Views

December 18, 2024

### SPOTLIGHT



#### Propel CGS into 2025!

With IVF being used as a wedge issue in attacks on reproductive rights and the incoming administration embracing disturbing eugenic ideas and policies, we've landed in a bewildering political moment. Your support boosts CGS's work connecting these dots and navigating the tricky terrain. Help us raise \$25,000 to propel CGS' urgent work in 2025!

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### ANNOUNCEMENTS



#### CGS is on Bluesky!

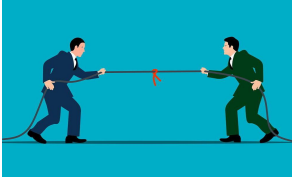
We're joining millions of new users on this exciting new alternative to X (Twitter). We'll stay on both sites (for now), but hope you will connect with us on Bluesky [here](#).

### COMMENTARY

#### Serving Two Masters: Trump Team's Tensions on Reproductive Politics

[Pete Shanks](#), *Biopolitical Times* | 12.16.2024

The incoming Trump Administration may face difficulties establishing consistent policies about controversial issues concerning human



reproduction. It will have to navigate the goals of Project 2025 on the one hand and the desires of Trump's biggest donor, Elon Musk, on the other.

## WHAT WE'RE READING

“DESIGNER BABIES” AND REPRODUCTIVE FUTURES | GENE THERAPIES  
EUGENICS | ASSISTED REPRODUCTION | SURROGACY360 | VARIOUS

### “DESIGNER BABIES” AND REPRODUCTIVE FUTURES

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#### Reproductive Futures: The Promises and Pitfalls of In-Vitro Gametogenesis

[Sarojini Nadimpally and Gargi Mishra](#), *The Wire* | 12.15.2024

Probable risks and misuses of IVG make it essential to have open and transparent conversations about the ethical, social, and legal implications of the technology. These conversations should involve diverse people, including ethicists, scientists, policymakers, and the general public.

#### Designer Babies Are Teenagers Now—and Some of Them Need Therapy Because of It

[Emi Nietfeld](#), *Wired* | 12.11.2024

Fertility businesses sell embryo screening technologies to parents as a chance to optimize their children and achieve domestic bliss. Many of these “designer babies” are now teens who are struggling with the fallout from their parents’ attempts to control their futures.

#### Silicon Valley’s tech elite want to make superbabies. They shouldn’t

[Julia Brown and Daphne Martschenko](#), *The San Francisco Standard* | 11.23.2024

Silicon Valley parents are embracing genetic screening of embryos in an attempt to control their children’s future. While the technology can’t deliver on its promises, its use contributes to the damaging message that health, success, and happiness begin with genetic optimization.

## GENE THERAPIES

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#### For kids with rare genetic disorders, customized CRISPR treatments offer hope

[Rob Stein](#), *NPR* | 12.13.2024

Scientists are proposing to speed up development of gene therapies for the rarest disorders by seeking FDA approval for a CRISPR “cookbook” that could be applied to target different genes without needing additional approvals.

#### CMS enters agreement with Vertex, bluebird to improve access to gene therapies

*Reuters* | 12.04.2024

To help patients access gene therapies for sickle cell disease, the US Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services have entered into agreements with two companies that tie payments to whether the therapy improves health outcomes.

#### FDA probes blood cancer risk from bluebird’s gene therapy, weighs regulatory action

[Christy Santhosh](#), *Reuters* | 11.27.2024

Bluebird bio’s gene therapy for cerebral adrenoleukodystrophy, a rare neurological disorder, raises the risks of blood cancer for those who receive it. The treatment already carries a warning about possible blood cancers, and the FDA now recommends that alternatives, such as stem cell transplants, be pursued first.

## EUGENICS

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### **Publisher reviews national IQ research by British ‘race scientist’ Richard Lynn**

**Hannah Devlin and David Pegg**, *The Guardian* | 12.10.2024

The academic publisher Elsevier is reviewing its decision to publish research papers by the late Richard Lynn, whose widely-critiqued work on race and IQ in the discredited field of “race science” is being used in right-wing propaganda.

### **Meet the pronatalists — and their huge families**

**Josie Ensor**, *The Times* | 12.03.2024

Elon Musk and Donald Trump are among an uneasy alliance of US conservatives and tech libertarians who agree women should be encouraged to have more children. Pronatalists fear declining fertility rates and propose policies to increase them, either through encouraging the use of reproductive technologies or removing access to contraception and abortion.

### **The eugenicist of UNESCO**

**Stefan Bernhardt-Radu**, *Aeon* | 12.02.2024

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization was founded in 1945 in an effort to overcome ignorance and prejudice rampant during the Second World War—but its first director embraced the discriminatory and racist ideals of eugenics.

## ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

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### **Law professor’s research sheds light on under-regulated fertility industry**

**Michelle LePage**, *TorontoMet Today* | 12.13.2024

New research found that egg donors in Canada felt inadequately informed about what egg provision truly involved. Risks and side effects were downplayed or weren’t well explained, and physicians didn’t consistently tell egg donors about the lack of long-term data on egg provision.

### **The Egg: A Story of Extraction, Exploitation, and Opportunity**

**Natalie Obiko Pearson, Jessica Brice, Susan Berfield, Vernon Silver, Kanoko Matsuyama, Cindy Wang, Sinduja Rangarajan, Fani Nikiforaki**, *Bloomberg* | 12.12.2024

A Bloomberg investigation details the operations of egg retrieval and “donation” across borders. A key piece of the \$35 billion global reproductive market, the global egg trade lacks regulations and exploits girls and women for profit.

### **Hong Kong’s IVF Rules Send People Into Black Market for Eggs, Embryos**

**Kristine Servando**, *Bloomberg* | 12.05.2024

Policies in Hong Kong, including “baby bonuses,” aim to reverse a declining fertility rate, but the country limits IVF to straight, married, infertile couples, leading some residents go abroad for access to IVF and surrogacy.

### **Cambodia jails 13 pregnant Filipino surrogates**

**Alex Loftus**, *BBC News* | 12.03.2024

Thirteen women from the Philippines were convicted of human trafficking in Cambodia for intending to sell babies they carried through surrogacy, which is illegal in the country. They were sentenced to four years in prison, but with two years suspended.

### **How a Billionaire’s ‘Baby Project’ Ensnared Dozens of Women**

**Jackie Davalos and Sophie Alexander**, *Bloomberg* | 12.02.2024

Convicted US insurance fraudster Greg Lindberg built a network of egg donors and surrogates through manipulation and deceit—part of his “baby project” to have dozens of children with partners who have “Aryan looks.” US fertility clinics helped him do it.

## An I.V.F. Mix-Up, a Shocking Discovery and an Unbearable Choice

Susan Dominus, *The New York Times Magazine* | 11.25.2024

Families affected by fertility clinic errors, from failing freezers to embryo mix-ups, confront an industry dominated by private equity-backed, for-profit clinics that operate in a regulatory dead zone.

## SURROGACY 360

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### How Philippine clinics illegally facilitate surrogacy

Natashya Gutierrez, *Rappler* | 12.01.2024

Although surrogacy itself is not regulated in the Philippines, many surrogacy clinics illegally falsify birth certificates of children born via surrogacy to avoid the time-consuming process of changing parentage from the birth mother to intended parents.

## VARIOUS

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### 23andMe's struggles are a sign that direct-to-consumer DNA testing needs stronger oversight

Aileen Editha, *The Conversation* | 12.11.2024

The recent controversies surrounding 23andMe, including its financial struggles and concerns over data security, have reignited calls from customers, scholars, and members of the public for stricter regulations covering genetic information and the companies that handle it.

### Victory! Federal Court Strikes Down Lax GMO Rules, Halts GE Crop Introductions Without USDA Oversight

Center for Food Safety | 12.03.2024

A federal district court ruled that genetically engineered organisms must be regulated, overturning the Trump administration's curtailing of government oversight of GE crops, trees, and grasses from four years ago.

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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