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October 2019



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# BioPolitical

# News&Views

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## SPOTLIGHT

The Center for Genetics and Society, the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society, and the School of Public Health at UC Berkeley invite you to:

OCT  
18

6:30-  
8:30 PM

FREE AND  
OPEN TO THE  
PUBLIC/  
WHEELCHAIR  
ACCESSIBLE  
/RSVP  
REQUIRED  
DUE TO ROOM  
CAPACITY

School of  
Public Health,  
UC Berkeley,  
First Floor  
Colloquium  
Room, 1919  
Shattuck Ave.

# CLIMATE CRISIS, DESIGNER BABIES, OUR COMMON FUTURE

An Evening with **Bill McKibben**

and **john a. powell**

MODERATED BY **Osagie K. Obasogie**

RSVP & ALL DETAILS AT  
[tinyurl.com/  
mckibben-powell](http://tinyurl.com/mckibben-powell)

Join us for this powerful  
conversation on the future of our  
planet and our shared humanity.

Will you be in the Bay Area on  
Friday, October 18?

**Join us** for "Climate Crisis, Designer Babies, Our Common Future," an evening with environmentalist Bill McKibben and scholar john a. powell. **RSVP** today for this important discussion about how climate change and human genome editing will influence the future of our planet and our shared humanity – and what we can do about it. Sponsored by the Center for Genetics and Society, the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society, and the UC Berkeley

## COMMENTARY



### Will Putin Prevent Rebrikov from Attempting Heritable Genome Editing?

**Pete Shanks**, *Biopolitical Times* | 10.08.2019

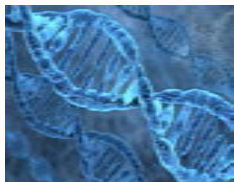
Denis Rebrikov, the Russian molecular biologist who has threatened to edit the genomes of human embryos, is growing impatient with what he describes as “yammering” among decision-makers at the government agencies to whom he has appealed for approval. The ultimate decision-maker, however, may be Russia’s president, who has expressed more than a passing interest in heritable genome editing.



### We’re a Disability Rights Organization, and We Oppose AB 922

**Silvia Yee**, *Biopolitical Times* | 10.05.2019

People with disabilities have a particularly complex relationship with genetic testing and research. This bill, if signed into law by Governor Newsom, would expand the research market for women’s eggs. It would not improve health disparities that affect the lives of people with disabilities. It may, in fact, worsen them.



### More Than a Misstep: The NAS Twitter Debacle Represents an Abuse of Authority

**Pete Shanks**, *Biopolitical Times* | 10.01.2019

The National Academies of Sciences recently posted a highly controversial tweet that linked to an equally brow-raising video about the future of heritable genome editing. Critics were quick to point out that both the trivializing tone and the skewed content fell short.



### It’s Past Time to Compensate Survivors of Eugenic Sterilization

**Emily Galpern**, *Biopolitical Times* | 09.25.2019

It’s been five years since California passed a law banning eugenic sterilization in state prisons. Since then, other states have gone one step further, offering redress to survivors of state-sanctioned reproductive abuses. Despite repeated efforts to pass a similar bill, California has not. Why?



## Twenty Years Later, What Have We Learned from Jesse Gelsinger's Death?

**Pete Shanks**, *Biopolitical Times* | 09.11.2019

When Jesse Gelsinger was 18, he decided to volunteer for a gene therapy trial. He had a severe adverse reaction and died four days later. Many scientists lament that his death set the field of gene therapy back ten years, but—given what emerged about the misconduct surrounding his treatment—this is not the most salient lesson.

## CGS IN THE NEWS



### California Shouldn't Expand the Market for Women's Eggs

**Lisa Ikemoto and Diane Tober**, *San Francisco Chronicle* | 09.12.2019

Proponents of AB 922 insist it would not exploit vulnerable women, but a sizable group of feminist scholars and reproductive rights, women's health, LGBTQ rights and public interest organizations are deeply troubled by this bill, and have called on Governor Newsom to veto it.

## WHAT WE'RE READING

[Assisted Reproduction](#) | [Eugenics](#) | [Gene Therapy](#) | [Genomics](#)  
[Heritable Gene Editing](#) | [Stem Cells](#) | [Surrogacy](#) | [Synthetic Biology](#)

## ASSISTED REPRODUCTION

### Despite Calls for a Moratorium, More 'Three-Parent' Babies Expected Soon

**Emily Mullin**, *One Zero* | 09.16.2019

At least 10 babies have been born as a result of a controversial in vitro fertilization procedure (misleadingly referred to as “mitochondrial replacement”) that involves combining a mother's egg with a donor egg. Fertility experts in Europe are urging caution.

### 'There's No Such Thing as Anonymity': With Consumer DNA Tests, Sperm Banks Reconsider Long-held Promises to Donors

**Meghana Keshavan**, *STAT* | 09.11.2019

Many clinics have revised their policies to make clear that they can only guarantee the clinic will not share donor information—not that the donor won't be eventually identified.

## HERITABLE GENOME EDITING

### Future of Genetically Modified Babies May Lie in Putin's Hands

[Stepan Kravchenko](#), *Bloomberg* | 09.28.2019

A secret meeting in Moscow this July discussed threats by biochemist Denis Rebrikov to produce genetically modified children. The meeting included some of Russia's top geneticists, health officials, and a "special guest" - an endocrinologist long believed to be the daughter of Vladimir Putin.

### **Risking Women's Health, While Widening the Door to Techno-Eugenics**

[Tina Stevens and Stuart Newman](#), *CounterPunch* | 09.26.2019

Why is the demand for women's eggs for bioresearch growing? One highly controversial reason is to fund research seeking to create gene-edited embryos.

### **A New Book Offers an Introduction to the Ethical Dimensions of Germline Gene Editing**

[Adam Hayden](#), *Science* | 09.30.2019

Françoise Baylis' new book *Altered Inheritance* is a "foundational tool" in the path toward justice, responsibility, accountability, and consensus-building—all features of socially just science.

### **When Might Human Germline Editing Be Justified?**

[Jennifer M. Gumer](#), *The Hastings Center* | 09.26.2019

The number of cases in which germline editing is the only option for parents with heritable diseases to have a genetically related child is extremely small. This fact must be emphasized in the discussions surrounding its use and regulation.

### **Before Heritable Genome Editing, We Need Slow Science and Dialogue 'Within and Across Nations'**

[Françoise Baylis](#), *Science* | 09.30.2019

The *whether* of heritable human genome editing has not been resolved, and yet some scientists continue to race ahead with the *how* of it, ignoring the myriad calls for public consultation. To change this, we must move the dial from public education to public empowerment.

## **EUGENICS**

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### **How Dismantling Welfare Continues the Legacy of Eugenics**

[Audrey Farley](#), *The Washington Post* | 09.17.2019

Proposed cuts to SNAP are ostensibly based on the idea that aid to the poor incentivizes poverty. In reality, these cuts aren't about helping people out of poverty; they're about population control.

### **Indigenous Women in Canada Are Still Being Sterilized Without Their Consent**

[Ankita Rao](#), *VICE* | 09.09.2019

More than 100 Indigenous women from the Canadian province of Saskatchewan have come forward to say they were coerced or forced into sterilization procedures as recently as 2018. Many are part of a class-action lawsuit.

## GENE THERAPY

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### **In a CRISPR First, Therapy Intended to Cure HIV Patient Appears Safe — Though Ineffective**

[Sharon Begley](#), *STAT* | 09.11.2019

An HIV-positive man in China is the longest-followed individual ever to be treated with CRISPR. Nineteen months later, he does not appear to have suffered ill effects from the treatment, but his HIV numbers rose and his healthy T cell numbers fell.

## GENOMICS

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### **'Rapid DNA' Promises Breakthroughs in Solving Crimes. So Why Does It Face a Backlash?**

[Maura Dolan](#), *Los Angeles Times* | 09.25.2019

Having a local machine that can analyze DNA evidence could be a major benefit to law enforcement agencies. But some critics have become wary of potential abuses and misuses of the technology.

### **U.S. Government Plans to Collect DNA from Detained Immigrants**

[Caitlin Dickerson](#), *The New York Times* | 10.02.2019

The Justice Department is developing a federal regulation that would give immigration officers the authority to collect DNA from immigrants detained in detention facilities. The samples would be added to a national database of evidence taken from people arrested, charged, or convicted in connection with serious crimes.

### **DNA Company Tampered With Results, Former Employees Say**

[Kristen V Brown](#), *Bloomberg Business Week* | 09.11.2019

Seventeen people who used to work for Orig3n say its test kits—which are supposed to reveal which kinds of food, exercise, and beauty products are right for your particular genetic profile—sometimes failed to work as advertised. The company also reportedly cut corners, tampered with or fabricated results, and failed to meet basic scientific standards.

## STEM CELLS

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### **Rogue Stem Cell Clinics Come Under Microscope as California Considers Oversight**

[Erin Allday](#), *San Francisco Chronicle* | 09.18.2019

California has more for-profit stem cell clinics than any other state. Despite pressure to tamp down the industry, which profits by selling patients risky, unproven, and non-FDA-approved treatments, almost no action has been taken.

### **\$5.5 Billion Stem Cell Ballot Measure: California Backers Taking First Formal Step This Month**

[David Jensen](#), *California Stem Cell Report* | 09.10.2019

Submitting the proposed funding measure to California election officials will trigger a

lengthy process, which begins with gathering the voter signatures necessary to qualify the proposal for the November 2020 ballot.

## SURROGACY

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### Ukraine's 'Baby Factories': The Human Cost of Surrogacy

[Madeline Roache](#), *Al Jazeera* | 09.13.2019

Ukraine is becoming an increasingly popular destination for individuals and couples who wish to form families through commercial surrogacy. But an increasing number of intended parents and surrogates report that the intermediary companies they initially trusted became abusive, provided poor living and medical conditions, and engaged in deceptive practices.

## SYNTHETIC BIOLOGY

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### Scientists Create A Device That Can Mass-Produce Human Embryoids

[Rob Stein](#), *NPR* | 09.11.2019

Some scientists welcome the development as an important advance for studying early human embryonic development; critics are raising questions about the ethics of manufacturing synthetic human life.

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