

DNA Databases Prelude to Return of Eugenics?

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"The authors of a 2001 study 'were struck' by the large number of state government officials who agreed with a specific statement regarding assessment of a child's suitability for future reproduction," the report said. "Nineteen (54 percent) of 35 ... respondents who routinely provide counseling – mostly newborn genetic screening follow-up staff at state health departments across the country – thought it important when giving advice to parents to 'identify children who might be, for genetic reasons, unsuitable choices for future reproduction,'" the report said.

The concept of "identifying" those who would be "unsuitable" for reproduction is enough reason for parents to be alarmed, and people should start demanding fully informed consent requirements, Brase said. "To protect every American's right to self-determination, genetic privacy, and DNA property rights, it is time to require informed written parent consent for all facets of the newborn genetic screening program, including storage and use of genetic test results and newborn DNA," Brase said.

She said most states do not require parental consent for newborn genetic testing now or for the government to keep the genetic results. Most states now keep DNA results for a period of time – some extending indefinitely. "Most parents have no idea that government is doing the testing or retaining the data and DNA," the report said.'

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