



THEM BEFORE US

Children's Rights Before Adult Desires

VIOLATING CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO LIFE

Only 7% of lab-created children (IVF is essential to surrogacy) will be born alive. Most will perish in forgotten freezers, won't survive "thawing," fail to implant, be discarded for being non viable/the wrong sex, be aborted "selectively reduced," or be donated to research.

When you see surrogate-born children whose parents are lobbying in the capitol remember, those babies are among the few who didn't die in the process. Most children created via surrogacy contracts will lose their right to life.

VIOLATING CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO THEIR MOTHERS AND FATHERS

Children Suffer When They Lose Their Birth Mothers

Studies show that maternal separation, a feature of surrogacy, is a major physiological stressor for the infant and even brief maternal deprivation can permanently alter the structure of the infant brain. Many adoptees argue that their "primal wound" of maternal separation manifested as depression, abandonment/loss issues, and emotional problems throughout their lives. It hindered their attachment, bonding, psychological health, self-esteem, and future relationships. One surrogate-born woman notes:

"Children of surrogacy, just like children of a traditional adoption, deal with traumas. We want to know where we come from... who gave birth to us and what they are like. When we have children in this world who already need homes, why are we intentionally creating children [via surrogacy] to go through adoption traumas?"

Children Suffer When They Lose Their Biological Parents

Children have a right to be known, loved, and raised by their biological parents. Surrogacy routinely severs a child's relationship with his or her genetic mother and/or father through use of sperm and egg "donation."

- **Safety.** Children raised by their married biological mothers and fathers are most likely to be safe and loved. While heroic step-parents do exist, overall the presence of unrelated adults drastically increases a child's risk of abuse and neglect. Statistically, biological parents are the most protective of and invested in children. Even if they aren't neglected or abused, children tend to feel less connected to unrelated adults. That's often true for children created via reproductive technologies:

"After a wrenching divorce, I never again saw that 'dad' of mine. My mother remarried, and I was given a new 'dad.' But neither the first nor the second man ever made me feel safe in my own home."

- Alana Newman, child of sperm donor

"I still wonder and ponder, 'who is my REAL Mother'? My current Mother...well growing up never accepted me...or even really cared to grow a bond with me...It makes sense why now. There is a massive disconnection due to IVF."

- Son of egg donor

Adoption is an institution centered around the needs of children. #BigFertility is a marketplace centered around the desires of adults. Unlike adoption agencies, #BigFertility conducts no screenings of "intended" parents, placing children in unstable, risky, unmonitored households.

CHILDREN HAVE A RIGHT:

- to life
- to their mothers and fathers
- to be born free, not bought and sold

SURROGACY VIOLATES ALL THREE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

- **Identity.** Genetic parents are the only two people who provide something children crave- biological identity. A survey of adults conceived via sperm donation confirmed that biology matters. Most of the respondents,
 - agreed "*my donor is half of who I am.*"
 - often wondered what personality traits, skills, and physical similarities they shared with their donor.
 - worried they did not have a complete/accurate medical history.

"Who am I? I'm thankful to know I'm at least related to my dad, but when I look in the mirror, I wonder where my face comes from." - Child of egg donor

- **Motherlessness.** Many surrogate children will be denied the daily presence of a mother. Motherless children are deprived of the developmental benefits of gender complementarity and experience diminished outcomes as a result. They are also starved of the maternal love they crave:

"I didn't know there was such a thing as a mother until I watched 'The Land Before Time.' My 5-year-old brain could not understand why I didn't have the mom that I suddenly desperately wanted. I felt the loss. I felt the hole. As I grew, I tried to fill that hole with aunts, my dad's lesbian friends and teachers. I craved a mother's love even though I was well-loved by my two gay dads."

VIOLATING CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO BE BORN FREE

In 2012, Theresa Erickson was found guilty of baby selling. She implanted women with unrelated embryos and during their second trimester would solicit intended parents, claiming the original parents had backed out. She charged between \$100-150K per baby. Erickson's crime was not that babies went home with unrelated adults- a common occurrence for #BigFertility. It was that she signed the surrogacy contract *after* conception (child-trafficking), not *before* ("helping to create a family"). Of course a post-conception contract can't alleviate a child's genealogical bewilderment, feelings of commodification, and mother-loss trauma. **Other than timing, there's no legal difference between child-trafficking and commercial surrogacy.**

The largest study of children created via sperm donation, which carries a much smaller price tag than surrogacy, found nearly half agreed with the statement, "It bothers me that money was exchanged in order to conceive me."

"I don't care why my parents did this. It looks to me like I was bought and sold. You can dress it up with as many pretty words as you want... But the fact is that someone has contracted you to make a child, give up your parental rights and hand over your flesh and blood child. When you exchange something for money it is called a commodity. Babies are not commodities. Babies are human beings." -Brian C.(Child of Surrogacy)

"My conception was bought and sold, my father, the sperm prostitute. He is a seller not a donor. The cryobanks are a billion dollar corporation not a benevolent non- profit organization to help the infertile. Money is all that matters. Money is dirty and I was born out of it.... My life had a price and I am the one who bears the consequences." -Child of sperm donor

"...being 'wanted' can sometimes feel like a curse, like I was created to make you happy, my rights be damned. I'd be lying if I said I never felt commodified." - Bethany, Child of sperm donor

A digital copy of this letter with links can be found here: <https://thembeforeus.com/south-dakota-fact-sheet/>
A detailed explanation of surrogacy's harms, additional child testimonies, and more studies: <https://thembeforeus.com/dear-legislative-allies-this-is-how-surrogacy-harms-children/>



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