

Translating Bioethics into Policy: Bioethics Legislative Opportunities, Outcomes and Models (BLOOM)

Project Description

The controversy surrounding the recent Alabama Supreme Court [decision](#) finding that frozen embryos created through IVF are “minors” for the purpose of the state’s wrongful death statute, has spotlighted a bioethics policy issue that requires attention. While IVF is an accepted part of American reproductive medicine—with nearly 3% of all births conceived with IVF—the lack of state law governing the disposition of embryos makes the practice vulnerable to limitation, prohibition, and custodial disputes over surplus embryos. There is a 50-year record of bioethics scholarship on the moral and legal status of embryos, their permissible uses for reproduction and research, dispositional authority over embryos, and the role or rights of gamete donors and surrogate mothers. Yet, there is no comparable body of statutory drafts available for policymakers to review and adopt that reflects a consensus reflecting those findings and recommendations. BLOOM seeks to address the problem of state-level policy for the management and disposition of IVF embryos, drawing on the existing bioethics and legal literature to develop model legislation that can be adapted by each state.

Methodologically, the project will entail a Core Team (PI and Co-Is) who will lead the process of drafting model legislation, supplemented by an Advisory Group. The Core Team will be supported by the work of research assistants who will provide data on existing state law and formal drafting assistance. The Core Team and Advisory Group will meet 4-5 times over the year of the project, once in-person (at the Hopkins Bloomberg Center in Washington, DC) and the rest by video conference.