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Indiana Law Fertility Fraud Expert Participates in Washington, DC Roundtable

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Indiana Law fertility fraud expert participates in Washington, DC roundtable

Professor Jody Madeira, an internationally recognized expert in fertility fraud, bioethics, and law and medicine, participated this morning (January 26) in a bipartisan roundtable discussion with victims of fertility fraud.

The event was facilitated by U.S. Representatives Stephanie Bice (R-OK), Mikie Sherrill (D-NJ), Julia Letlow (R-LA), and Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA) following the January 23 introduction of their Protecting Families From Fertility Fraud Act, which would—for the first time—make it a federal crime to knowingly misrepresent the source of DNA used in any procedure that involves assisted reproduction.

Madeira was the only non-victim and non-elected representative invited to participate at the roundtable, which is taking place in the Rayburn House Office Building.

The emotional event brought together women who were artificially inseminated without knowing the true source of...
the reproductive material used, and some of the now-adult children they gave birth to.

“Their existence should never be downtrodden,” Madeira told the group, referring to the human life created in part by fraud or deception. “The outcome of the process resulted in your presence here today, and your existence should never be questioned. It’s important to understand that reproduction is a very divisive subject. This bill is standing up for transparency and truth.”

Madeira had testified in favor of a groundbreaking Indiana law in 2019 that made fertility fraud or deception a felony.
offense, while allowing victims to pursue a cause of action for civil fertility fraud that would allow them to recover the costs of the fertility treatment.

Her testimony in favor of the Indiana law and her extensive research and scholarship on the issue put Madeira on the radar of other states considering similar legislation.

Madeira was featured in the popular Netflix documentary *Our Father*, which chronicled the case of an Indianapolis fertility specialist—Donald Cline—who used his own sperm to impregnate multiple women without informing them he was the donor.

Cline was convicted of multiple obstruction of justice felonies connected to a fertility fraud investigation, but prosecutors could not pursue anything beyond those charges—all because there were no laws prohibiting a fertility specialist from using their own genetic material to help a woman conceive.

The four U.S. Representatives who have introduced the PFFFA said the issue needs to be addressed by lawmakers to prevent such cases from happening again.

“"The crime of fertility fraud has impacted individuals and families across the nation,"” the four said in a statement, “"and this event will focus on the need to protect consumers and to provide justice for victims."

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