

Thank you for allowing me to speak today. My name is Traci Portugal, I live in Washington state and I am the result of fertility fraud. Years ago my parents fertility doctor told them he would use sperm from a pre-med student to help my father's sperm along and convinced my parents to tell no one. Fast forward to 2019 when I took an over-the-counter DNA test and not only did I discover I was donor conceived, I discovered my mother's fertility doctor in San Diego California, Dr Gary Vandenberg, was my biological father and that he'd used his own sperm without my parents' permission.

Finding out all of this out was absolutely devastating. It felt like I tumbled into a black hole with no footholds and no knowledge on how to piece back together who I was, where I belonged, and how I fit into this world. I felt the dual grief of knowing my existence was based on 40+ years of lies and that my biological father was a man who abused his position as a trusted medical professional by taking advantage of his patients.

I have focused my pain and healing in working with other advocates and organizations such as Right To know to promote much needed fertility fraud legislation. I've also started gathering and publicly mapping fertility fraud cases across the US on a website I created called donordeceived.org. In the past year I have found over 50 donor fraud cases in at least 23 states and I've been told by lawyers and others this is just a fraction of the number of cases out there. Most cases are hidden behind Non-Disclosure agreements due to the inability to access medical records, the risk of drawn out legal court cases, and the emotional trauma many victims feel. Society's continued stigma and shame around donor conception also continues to keep many parents from telling their children they are donor conceived and has kept many victims from going public with their stories.

Fertility fraud encompasses more than just doctor donor fraud. There are cases of donors lying about their identity or medical history, of clinics not providing genetic screening or sharing important genetic medical issues with families, of people finding out their donor number does not match DNA results, and parents giving birth to other couple's children. I also know of several doctor donor conceived women who went to their mother's fertility/OBGYN and who are now dealing with the additional trauma of learning they were unknowingly examined and treated by their own biological fathers.

Processing a fertility fraud discovery takes time. As victims we carry the burden of processing the mental and medical issues associated with other's unethical choices. It took me almost a year to come to terms with my trauma, and to this day I still struggle with depression and feeling physically violated. Many of us struggle with how to tell our parents or find our parents have passed, taking the answers and much needed support with them. For those of us who reach out to the doctors or clinics hoping for answers, we find empty answers or dismissive resistance. For those of considering legal action, finding attorneys with enough interest and

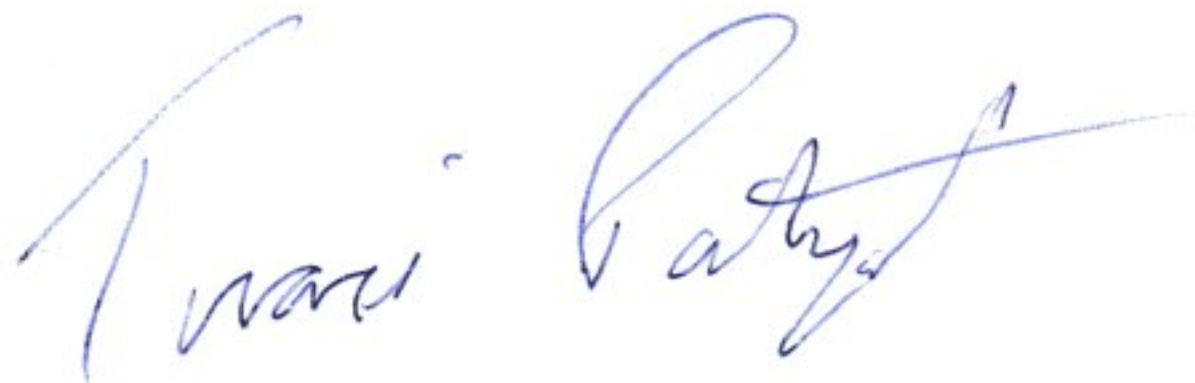
knowledge of fertility law can take time and forces us to constantly relive our traumatic discovery. Having a sufficient statute of limitations in support of fertility fraud discoveries is a must.

Did you also know, not one doctor who has committed fertility fraud, has lost his license here in the U.S.—this must be addressed.

Thank you again for letting me speak today. Although I am not from Iowa, I appreciate the chance to be a voice for those who could not be here today. Dr. Yugend is not the only known case of doctor donor fraud in this state; there are at least 12 known doctor-donor offspring in Iowa. And, as cases become public and more people take DNA tests, the number of fraud stories will only continue to grow.

I hope you will vote to pass Bill 1223 and help prevent fertility fraud. Future children conceived through assisted reproductive technologies deserve to be created from honesty, integrity, and love. We all deserve that, as do our children and our grandchildren.

Traci Portugal
Woodinville, Washington
March 1, 2021

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Traci Portugal". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.