

## Pro-life movement poses obstacles for CRISPR editing of human embryos

It's hard to discuss CRISPR without discussing, even tangentially, the issue of abortion. The gene editing technology has now been applied to [viable human embryos](#), opening up a door to editing genetic code in future humans. But there's an age-old debate, especially in the United States, over using embryos for scientific research, that has higher stakes than ever.

...A decade ago, under the George W. Bush administration, the US government had to grapple with two very different views of stem cell research...

The end result was a compromise. The Bush administration allowed scientists to continue working on existing embryos that had been harvested, but wouldn't fund any research that required more embryos.

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CRISPR takes this conversation to an unprecedented level. The technology could potentially be used for germline editing, which permanently alters genetic code as it is passed down from one generation to the next. It could be performed on gametes (individual sex cells), or on embryos. This has anti-abortion activists worried.

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Bioethicist Françoise Baylis said that anyone who has a moral opposition to conducting experiments on embryos will also have an issue with CRISPR research going forward. And she said it's unlikely that we'll find the same middle ground that Bush carved out during the stem cell decision, simply because the embryos used in that research no longer exist, meaning that more would have to be harvested.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [CRISPR Has a Pro-Life Problem](#)**

**For more background on the Genetic Literacy Project, read [GLP](#) on Wikipedia.**