



**American Society of Human Genetics**

ADVOCATE UPDATE

## ASHG President Dr. Gail Jarvik Comments on Texas Anti-Abortion Law



ASHG President Gail Jarvik, MD, PhD has released a statement reaffirming ASHG's longstanding support of a woman's right to make her own reproductive decisions, in response to the new Texas law, S.B. 8. The law prohibits abortion after the detection of a fetal heartbeat. "Decades of genetics research have enabled clinicians to identify the genetic signals of many deadly, devastating and debilitating fetal conditions," Jarvik said. "Because many devastating diagnoses can only be determined later in fetal development and the Texas

law effectively bans abortion at only six weeks into a pregnancy, it will prevent women and families from using genetic information to inform reproductive decisions." Read Dr. Jarvik's statement in its entirety [here](#), and ASHG's Perspective, "[Reproductive Choice and Research](#)," published last year in the *American Journal of Human Genetics*.

## NIH Funding and Rally for Medical Research

The 2021 Virtual Rally for Medical Research brought 450 advocates, representing 47 states, to advocate for biomedical research and NIH funding.



Thank you to ASHG's Government and Public Advocacy Committee (GPAC) Chair, Lynn Jorde, PhD, GPAC member Rebecca Meyer-Schuman, PhD, (pictured left with fellow advocates from Texas) and ASHG Advocates who participated and

helped to make it a successful event.

The Rally comes at an important time as Congress has yet to pass Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 spending bills that fund NIH and other federal agencies, beginning on October 1, 2021. Last week, the House passed a Continuing Resolution (CR), a temporary funding measure, through December 3, 2021. The Senate will also need to agree on the measure before October 1 to avoid a government shutdown.

## Meet ASHG-NHGRI Policy Fellow



In August, Katharine Nichole Holm, PhD, joined ASHG as the new Genetics and Public Policy Fellow. The fellowship, co-sponsored by NHGRI, is designed for early-career professionals transitioning to a career in policy. Learn more about Dr. Holm and why she thinks getting involved in policy and advocacy is an important part of being a scientist at [ASHG's blog](#).

In addition, be on the lookout for ASHG's upcoming launch of a new program, the [Advocacy Certificate for Human Genetics and Genomics Trainees \(ACGT\)](#). The ACGT program is designed for trainees who are interested in pursuing a research or clinical career but who would like to explore policy and what it means to be an advocate for human genetics and genomics research. Applications will open in November 2021. Stay tuned for more details!

## In Other News

- The Association for Molecular Pathology (AMP) submitted [comments](#) to the U.S. Patent and

Trademark Office's (USPTO) [Request for Public Input](#) in a patent eligibility study. ASHG, in partnership with AMP, ACMG, and other organizations, [opposes patent law reforms](#) that would allow the patenting of genes.

- In August, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) released a memo outlining [research priorities for FY 2023](#). Of note is the focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion priorities in research and STEM education.
- President Biden recently announced the 30 members of the [President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology](#) (PCAST).
- Apply for the Research!America [Civic Engagement Microgrant Program](#) by October 12, 2021. Microgrants will be awarded to graduate student and postdoc-led to design projects that create dialogue with public officials, local community leaders, and the public. An [informational meeting](#) will be held on September 29, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. ET.

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