

*Biology, Medicine, and the Bill of Rights*

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**BIOLOGY,  
MEDICINE, AND  
THE BILL OF RIGHTS**

**SPECIAL REPORT**

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT

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## Foreword

Rapid progress in biological sciences—so dramatic that we now speak of “The New Biology”—has brought in its wake many social, legal, and ethical issues. In research laboratories, medical practice, public health programs, genetic counseling, law enforcement, insurance, the patenting process, agriculture, and many other fields, legal controversies and public policy debates have arisen. Some of these issues, many of which have been probed in recent OTA reports, also entail challenges to traditional interpretations of constitutional principles and precedents.

This special report considers the implications of new developments in biological sciences for the freedoms and protections embedded in our Bill of Rights. It is one of a series of publications coming from OTA’s Constitutional Bicentennial Project, begun in 1987 at the request of the House Committee on the Judiciary and its Subcommittee on Courts, Civil Liberties, and the Administration of Justice. Earlier publications include a background paper, *Science, Technology, and the Constitution* (September 1987), and two special reports: *Science, Technology, and the First Amendment* (January 1988), and *Criminal Justice, New Technology, and the Constitution* (May 1988).



JOHN H. GIBBONS  
*Director*

## **Biology, Medicine, and the Bill of Rights Project Review Panel**

William Carey  
Advisor to the Carnegie Foundation of  
New York  
Washington, DC

James Duggan  
Director  
New Hampshire Appellate Defender  
Program  
Concord, NH

Judith Lichtenberg  
Center for Philosophy and Public Policy  
University of Maryland  
College Park, MD

Peter Low  
Hardy Cross Dillard Professor of Law and  
John V. Ray Research Professor of Law  
School of Law  
University of Virginia  
Charlottesville, VA

The Honorable Pauline Newman  
United States Circuit Judge  
United States Court of Appeals for the  
Federal Circuit  
Washington, DC

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Dean  
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Thomas Smith, Esquire  
Assistant Director  
Criminal Justice Section  
American Bar Association  
Washington, DC

Paul Stephen  
Professor  
University of Virginia  
School of Law  
Charlottesville, VA

Laurence R. Tancredi  
Kraft Eidman Professor of Medicine and  
the Law  
Director of the Health Law Program  
University of Texas Health Sciences Center  
Houston, TX

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# **Biology, Medicine, and the Bill of Rights OTA Project Staff**

John Andelin, *Assistant Director, OTA  
Science, Information, and Natural Resources Division*

Fred W. Weingarten, *Program Manager  
Communication and Information Technologies Program*

## **Project Staff**

Vary T. Coates, *Project Director*

Mary Ann Madison, *Research Analyst*

Benjamin C. Amick III, *Analyst*

## **Administrative Staff**

Liz Emanuel, *Administrative Assistant*

Karolyn Swauger, *Secretary*

Rebecca Battle, *Secretary*