



Spike in school supply costs hits parents

INSIDE, 3A

Times-Mail

MONDAY, AUGUST 24, 2026 | TMNEWS.COM PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

ANALYSIS



Activists have intensified efforts to extend legal rights to embryos and fetuses. Personhood arguments now surface in not only abortion restrictions but also disputes involving pregnancy loss, child support and taxes.

ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Embryo personhood debate gains notice

HHS guidelines add to movement’s momentum after Dobbs decision

Risa Cromer
Purdue University
THE CONVERSATION

About 100,000 babies were born through in vitro fertilization in 2024, according to the most recent U.S. data. But IVF commonly involves trying to create multiple embryos, because success is never guaranteed. If unused, those embryos can be frozen, discarded, donated to research or donated to another fertility patient.

In the eyes of some anti-abortion activists, those frozen IVF embryos are already children – children who need to be “adopted” into families. And that idea now appears in a federal document: grant guidelines announced by the Department of Health and Human Services in June.

The department’s Embryo Adoption Awareness and Services program has existed since 2002. But this year’s funding notice describes IVF embryos as “children who already exist and are in need of a family.” Rather than presenting “embryo adoption” as one option among many for patients with remaining embryos, the document describes the practice as centered on embryos’ “rights” and “best interests.”

This language draws from a decades-



An embryologist pulls out vials of human embryos from a liquid nitrogen storage container at a California IVF clinic in 2007. Grant guidelines announced by the Department of Health and Human Services in June describe IVF embryos as “children who already exist and are in need of a family.”

SANDY HUFFAKER/GETTY IMAGES

long movement to give personhood status to fetuses and embryos, including those made in fertility clinics. The personhood movement is rooted in a belief embraced by many conservative Christians: that human life begins at fertilization and should receive legal protection from that moment.

Embryo adoption occupies a niche corner of U.S. fertility care. But the notice brings far-reaching questions about reproductive politics into sharper focus, including the future of IVF – a fertility

treatment that many of those same conservative Christians support.

In my 2023 book, “Conceiving Christian America: Embryo Adoption and Reproductive Politics,” I show how embryo adoption developed as a Christian pro-life response to the accumulation of embryos remaining after IVF, recasting embryos as vulnerable children requiring rescue. Once a fringe view even among anti-abortion

See EMBRYOS, Page 2A

Search continues for wife in officer’s death

Anthony Thompson
USA TODAY

Police have issued an arrest warrant for a Massachusetts woman who has been missing for several days after her husband, a veteran Worcester police officer, was found dead inside the home they shared.

Karen Solomon, 58, is wanted on charges of assault and battery with a dangerous weapon and assault and battery with a dangerous weapon causing serious bodily injury, Worcester Police Chief Paul Saucier said during an Aug. 21 news conference. Authorities said Solomon remains missing and should be considered armed and dangerous as the search for her entered its fifth day.

Investigators have been looking for

See SEARCH, Page 2A



Doris Miller, who died during World War II, received the Navy Cross for his actions at Pearl Harbor.

PROVIDED BY NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND

Navy may name new aircraft carrier after Trump, not WWII hero

Michael Loria
USA TODAY

U.S. Navy officials may name a new aircraft carrier after President Donald Trump instead of a World War II sailor who heroically saved lives when Pearl Harbor was bombed, CNN and NBC News reported Aug. 20.

The reported move by the Navy to name the carrier, now called CVN-81, comes amid a decades-long push to recognize Doris Miller, an enlisted Black sailor who was a mess attendant second class aboard the battleship USS West Virginia when bombs began

See AIRCRAFT, Page 2A

