

California's Surrogacy Trade Exposed: 21 Children, One Dark Industry

by Leandra Wells, California Family Council, August 22, 2025

A recent surrogacy discovery in Arcadia, California, is forcing the question: "Who is the mother?" Authorities removed 15 toddlers from the Arcadia home of former Chinese government official Guojun Xuan and his wife, Silvia Zhang, after discovering a two-month-old with a traumatic head injury. In total, 21 children ranging from [two months to 13 years old](#), with six living elsewhere, all had U.S. birth certificates listed as children of the couple. The couple and their nannies are now under investigation for child abuse and neglect.

Many of these children were born through American surrogate mothers recruited via agencies and social media ads with little oversight. Guojun Xuan and his wife operated a surrogacy agency under the name Mark Surrogacy and misled women into carrying children for the 65-year-old man and his wife.

Children's rights advocate Katy Faust calls this incident a dystopic result of In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) and surrogacy. "You cannot have three kids under the age of three if you're operating under natural processes," said Faust, founder and president of [Them Before Us](#), an organization dedicated to defending children's right to their mother and father. "This is not a case of surrogacy gone wrong. This is surrogacy gone right. This is what surrogacy is designed to do: deliver custom-ordered children to adults."



A Human Rights Crisis

Shocking as it sounds, the family broke no surrogacy laws in California. In fact, California is one of the most surrogacy-friendly states in the nation, and that is exactly why international baby buyers come here.

But according to Faust, “Regulating surrogacy doesn’t make it safer,” she said. “It means anything can go, and then the government will enforce the contract. There’s no way to regulate surrogacy to make it safe. It needs to be banned.”

According to the [Daily Caller](#), “California lawmakers have designed surrogacy laws to eliminate nearly all barriers for intended parents, allowing them to have as many children as they wish with minimal legal oversight or accountability for the well-being of the children,” said Emma Waters, policy analyst at the Heritage Foundation’s Center for Technology and the Human Person.

Surrogate mother Kayla Elliot, who carried one of the children for the Arcadia family, told [The New York Post](#), “It’s horrific, it’s disturbing, it’s damaging emotionally. ... These agencies, we’re supposed to trust them and follow their guidance, and come to find out this whole thing was a scam, and the parents own the agency. That was not disclosed at all beforehand.” Elliot is now fighting for custody of the child she carried, who is currently in foster care.

Separation of Birth Mother from Biological Mother

Beyond the abuse and trafficking risks, surrogacy forces humanity to confront a question we never had to ask before: Who is the mother?

“For the first time in human history, we’ve separated the birth mother from the biological mother,” Faust said. “That was technologically impossible until 40 years ago. If you’re asking questions like ‘Who is mother?’ you have to say maybe we shouldn’t be intervening technologically like this.”

Faust explains that every surrogacy arrangement severs a child from their birth mother and often from their genetic mother or father as well.

From the moment of birth, the child loses the only person they have ever known, which can have lasting implications for their ability to trust and attach in the future. If the surrogate raises the child, identity struggles and “genealogical bewilderment” often follow, along with uncertainty about whether the surrogate will bond and commit in the same way a genetic parent would. “The truth is, the kid will experience loss either way,” Faust said. “So choose your loss.”

The Global Surrogacy Trade

Executive Director at Them Before Us, [J.K. Wood, posted on X](#), “This isn’t an isolated horror story. It’s a glimpse behind the curtain. Surrogacy is the global gateway to child trafficking. The truth about this industry is darker than you think.”

According to [The Heritage Foundation](#), a 2024 report by the American Society for Reproductive Medicine found that the international “rent-a-womb” industry in the United States is “disproportionately fueled by Chinese nationals (41.7 percent), with France (9.2 percent) and Spain (8.5 percent) as the next highest nationalities represented. Of the foreign nationals, the purchasing parents were most likely to be Asian men over the age of 42.”

A Christian Response to Surrogacy

[California Family Council](#) has long warned that surrogacy wrongfully commodifies women's bodies and inherently violates the dignity of both the surrogate and the child, turning women's wombs into rentable spaces and children into deliverables.

Many well-meaning Christians mistakenly believe surrogacy and IVF are "pro-life" because they result in children. But as Faust points out, [IVF](#) often results in the destruction of far more embryos than are ever born. "IVF kills four times more little lives than abortion," she said, "because only 7% of the fertilized eggs will be born alive."

Pro-life means protecting every life, not just the ones that survive the process. "Anytime the weak are asked to sacrifice for the strong, we are operating outside of God's design for family," Faust said.

The Industry Must End

The 21 children in Arcadia are precious, each made in the image of God, and worthy of protection. But the way they were brought into the world, separated from their mothers, shuffled between unrelated adults, and treated as commodities is corrupt.

This incident is a wake-up call for lawmakers and citizens alike. Surrogacy is not an act of compassion. It is a commercial industry that exploits women, separates children from their parents, and invites foreign exploitation into our communities.

"[California] has made it legal to buy and sell children... to acquire children not biologically related to you... to separate them from their mother or father," Faust said.

It's time for California and the nation to end this practice once and for all.

<https://www.californiafamily.org/2025/08/californias-surrogacy-trade-exposed-21-children-one-dark-industry/>