

Germany bans secret paternity tests

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The German parliament passed a law Friday outlawing secret genetic testing to determine the father of a child along with other privacy protection measures.

The draft law passed by the Bundesrat upper house bans women who are unsure which sexual partner fathered their child or suspicious men who want to determine that they are the father of a [child](#) from having a genetic test without the knowledge of their partners.

The legislation, however, allows for exceptions in situations in which the mother was raped.

The Bundesrat also outlawed [genetic testing](#) of foetuses to determine their sex, or a predisposition for diseases that only surface in later life.

"Prenatal tests may only have a clear medical purpose," the Bundesrat, which represents Germany's 16 federal states, said in a statement.

Insurance companies are barred from ordering genetic tests unless the policy allows for a payout of more than 300,000 euros (407,000 dollars) or an annual pension of more than 30,000 euros per year.

And employers may not test their staff unless there is a specific reason stipulated in the job description, for example in the chemicals industry for an allergy to substances handled at the workplace.

"Genetic tests may only be conducted with the consent of the person

being tested and only by a medical doctor," the Bundesrat said.

Personal privacy is particularly sensitive in Germany due to gross violations of civil liberties in the Nazi and communist eras.

Germany's parties debated the new legislation for years before it cleared the final hurdle Friday.

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