I wanted to study a modern court case to better understand how legal systems respond when new technologies and social changes create problems that existing laws were not designed to address. I was also interested in examining how public opinion and media attention can influence legal reform and shape the direction of legislation. While researching possible topics, I discovered In re Baby M, the first major contested surrogacy case in the United States. The case immediately stood out to me because it combined issues involving family law, reproductive technology, ethics, and public policy during a period when surrogacy laws were largely undefined. The revolution was the surrogacy access brought by emerging reproductive technology. The reaction came through public controversy and media attention. Finally, the reform came as states gradually enacted laws regulating surrogacy.

I started my research by collecting information about the case timeline, focusing on the events leading up to the trial. I found a book at my county library written by Mary Beth Whitehead, which provided a helpful firsthand account of the trial. In between my school's history day and regionals, I went to my state university's library. I used this opportunity to learn more about assisted reproductive technology in history and specific legislation over time. Later, between regionals and the state competition, I found several newspapers from the 1980s that highlighted the extensive public reaction to the case.

To create my project, I studied examples of successful National History Day websites to understand how to effectively connect primary sources with written analysis, including how to incorporate them into my website. I found primary newspaper articles, which helped support my argument. In my final product, I chose to emphasize media voices by organizing written sections alongside quotes and images, allowing the historical reaction to play a central role in presenting my argument.

The case, *In re Baby M*, brought national attention to the rising revolution that is reproductive technology like surrogacy and IVF, highlighting outdated family and adoption laws in the United States. The case forced courts and lawmakers to confront the inadequacy of laws that defined parenthood strictly through childbirth and prohibited compensation for parental rights. In response, states initially reacted with bans driven by fears of "baby-selling," but over time, sustained legal and social pressure led to significant reform. This caused the Uniform Parentage Act, which redefined parenthood around intent rather than biology, fundamentally transforming the legal structure of family law in several U.S. states.

In re Baby M is historically significant because it forced the United States to confront the growing revolution of surrogacy access created by emerging reproductive technologies. The reaction came through intense ethical debate across the U.S. about commercial surrogacy. Over time, the reform occurred as states gradually shifted from outright restrictions toward creating legal frameworks that regulated surrogacy agreements rather than completely prohibiting them. This transformation reshaped family law and reproductive rights by redefining legal understandings of parenthood and expanding access to family formation for many individuals and couples.