



How to
Speak Up for

Life

Questions & Answers
Driving the Debate

NEARLY 50 YEARS AGO, the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade* essentially invented a constitutional right to abortion-on-demand in the United States.¹

Since then, millions of Americans have sought to restore protection for the right to life of every person in culture and law.

Many state laws are protecting women and restoring the dignity of both mother and child in policy; and every day, thousands of pregnancy centers are helping women and children facing difficult circumstances.

Roughly half of Americans now identify themselves as “pro-life,” and strong majorities support commonsense policies to protect women from abortion’s harms.

Now more than ever, we need to **explain why every human has the right to life and how abortion victimizes both mother and child.** That’s why it’s important to be prepared to talk with friends, family, and co-workers about why we can protect the basic right to life and ensure the dignity and safety of all women.

People should know and share the answers to these questions:

1. What’s wrong with abortion?
2. What are the consequences of abortion?
3. Why should government protect life?

What’s wrong with abortion?

Abortion takes a child’s life. From the moment of conception, every person is a distinct and living human being with

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Offering Hope and Compassion to Women and Children

Each year, millions of women face an unplanned pregnancy and difficult decisions under trying circumstances. Throughout the country, approximately 2,700 pregnancy centers provide counseling, information, and life-affirming options to women.² Pregnancy centers offer:

- **Medical Services.** Many pregnancy centers provide free or low-cost pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, prenatal services, and referrals for pregnant women.
- **Information and Counseling.** Pregnancy centers offer accurate information about pregnancy and fetal development, present available options, and empower women to make the best decision for their own health and their child’s.
- **Continued Support.** In addition to meeting immediate needs through material support, pregnancy centers offer parenting classes and support groups for expectant mothers and fathers. Many centers also offer adoption information and referrals for birthmothers looking for loving families for their children.



intrinsic worth, who possesses the basic right to life.

Abortion harms women. Abortion poses serious short-term and long-term risks to women's physical and emotional health.³

Abortion harms all of us. It has created a culture that disregards the dignity of human life, endangers women, demeans motherhood, and denigrates men's role as fathers.

What are the consequences of abortion?

Legalized abortion has taken the lives of more than 60 million children since 1973. Abortion endangers women's health and safety and has sentenced countless women to physical and emotional harm.⁴

Every year, taxpayers are forced to subsidize the abortion industry, including Planned Parenthood—which performs about one out of every three abortions in the U.S., advocates for elective abortion-on-demand, and has opposed commonsense protections for women and children.⁵

Today, the United States is one of only seven countries in the world—in the company of China, North Korea, and Canada—in which elective abortions are allowed after 20 weeks (5 months).⁶

Why should government protect life?

All human beings have basic, natural rights—the most fundamental of these is the right to life. The right to life belongs not only to the strong and the powerful.

It belongs to all human beings regardless of age, dependency, or ability.

The government exists to protect our natural rights and has a duty to protect the weak from the strong. We all benefit when the law respects the dignity and value of *every* human life. Government should protect the right to life because it is the foundation of all other liberties.

In its 1973 opinion in *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court distorted the Constitution's view of liberty by excluding the youngest and most vulnerable children from the right to life. That sweeping decision invented a constitutional right to abortion. *Roe* has been used to advocate for abortion-on-demand throughout all nine months of pregnancy—a stance at odds with the majority of Americans and extreme among developed nations.⁷



More Questions & Answers

Q Aren't you sentencing women to unsafe abortions?

A Supporters claim legalized, elective abortion has improved women's health.⁸ But history tells a different story. Legalization has only given abortionists the cover of law to continue endangering women and taking the lives of children. Abortion-on-demand has harmed women through substandard care and misinformation.⁹

For example, in 2013, Philadelphia abortionist Kermit Gosnell was convicted of not only murdering infants born after failed abortion attempts, but causing the death of a 41-year-old woman during a procedure in his filthy, run-down clinic.

Gosnell's "house of horrors" is not an outlier in the abortion industry.¹⁰ Abortion clinics across the country are under investigation for dangerous, unsanitary conditions that jeopardize women's lives and health.¹¹



Q Doesn't everyone agree abortion should be legal?

A Two-thirds of Americans—including nearly 50 percent of Democrats and 70 percent of independents—believe late-term abortion should generally be illegal.¹² Eighty one percent oppose abortions in the third trimester—when the child can live outside the womb and women are at greater risk.¹³ Roughly half of Americans now identify themselves as “pro-life.” An increasing number of Americans oppose abortion because they’ve seen the harm it inflicts on women and realize the brutality of abortion to children.



Q Don't you care about women?

A Part of caring about women's health and lives includes making sure they're informed of abortion's serious risks.

Abortion victimizes both mother and child. Medical evidence shows the significant risks of abortion: Women can suffer from serious infections, depression, and increased risks of premature birth and other dangerous complications in future pregnancies.¹⁴

Women have even been injured and died as a result of legal abortion. Tonya Reaves, a 24-year-old single mother, bled to death in 2012, after an injury caused by a botched abortion in a midtown Chicago Planned Parenthood clinic.¹⁵

Yet, many women are never told about the negative effects of abortion or what an abortion will do to their child.

Those who care about women's dignity and health should insist that women have the most accurate counseling and comprehensive care—for themselves and their children.

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Planned Parenthood— Giant of the Abortion Industry

- **Promotes abortion at taxpayer expense.** In one year alone, Planned Parenthood affiliates performed 354,871 abortions while receiving over \$618 million in tax dollars.¹⁶ These affiliates performed more than three million abortions over the past decade.¹⁷
- **Profits from abortion.** Planned Parenthood has created a lucrative abortion practice. It has demanded that every local affiliate have at least one clinic that performs abortions¹⁸ and has been reported to enforce abortion quotas to increase revenue.¹⁹
- **Endangers women.** Numerous Planned Parenthood affiliates have been accused of neglecting the health and safety of patients and resisting efforts to improve safety standards.²⁰
- **Accused of financial scandals.** Planned Parenthood has repeatedly been accused of potential fraud—manipulating records and inflating costs to overbill government assistance programs.²¹ In 2013, a Texas affiliate had to pay a \$1.4 million settlement for overbilling American taxpayers.²²

Q Do you want to outlaw all abortion? Even in cases of rape? Aren't your views extreme?

A Rape is a horrific crime that is never the fault of the victim, who deserves prompt and compassionate care.

Facing a pregnancy caused by rape is a difficult and painful situation. But abortion increases physical and emotional harm to a woman and adds another victim to an already terrible crime.

We should protect the life of every child—regardless of how he or she was conceived.²³

What is extreme is using the case of rape to argue abortion should remain legal for any reason—through all nine months of pregnancy. Advocates of abortion argue for abortion-on-demand—even if performed only because the child is a girl, has a disability, or is simply inconvenient. That's not a view in line with most Americans and only increases the number of women harmed by abortion.

Q Doesn't a woman have the right to choose?

A Many women find themselves in complicated, painful situations that leave them with difficult choices. But when we talk about rights, we have to talk about the rights of *all* people. Every human being has the right to life—before and after birth. Nothing in the Constitution, rightly understood, prevents the government from protecting that right for everyone.

In fact, government has a duty to protect the most vulnerable in society and recognize the inherent value of all human life. We cannot exclude the youngest children from the precious right to life. We should recognize the dignity of every life by ensuring mothers have accurate information and children are welcomed in life and protected in law.



Q How does America compare to other nations in terms of abortion law?

A The United States is one of only a handful of developed countries in which late-term abortions after 20 weeks—5 months—are allowed. At that stage, the child is capable of feeling pain and women are at increased risk for the negative effects of abortion.²⁴ The United States—a country founded to protect unalienable human rights—should not deny those rights to the most vulnerable in our society.



Q Men don't know what it's like to be pregnant. What gives them the right to talk about abortion?

A Abortion is an issue that affects us all. Men are affected by abortion—by the loss of children, the harm to women they care about, and the loss of their role as fathers.

Abortion-on-demand can serve as a tool for some men to avoid committing to the mothers of their children.

But men who genuinely care about women are concerned about abortion's threat to women and recognize that both mother and child have a right to life. They acknowledge their responsibility—whether as fathers or concerned community members—to support women during difficult situations.

Q You supposedly care so much about the fetus before it's born; why don't you do anything to help children after they come into this world?

A Recognizing the inherent dignity of both children and women demands that we care for both people—before and after birth.²⁵

Approximately 2,700 pregnancy centers across the country provide compassionate care to women and their children. These centers offer counseling, material support, community referrals, and medical care.

Most importantly, pregnancy centers empower women by letting them know they have real choices. Women desiring to parent can find support for expectant mothers and fathers. Birthmothers are educated on the beautiful choice of adoption. Pregnancy centers offer information on the many adoption providers who stand ready to connect birthmothers and their children with loving, adoptive families.²⁶

Endnotes

- 1 Having invented a constitutional right to abortion, the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade* prohibited state restrictions on abortion before viability. While the Court stated that a State could impose restrictions on that right after viability, it provided that the State must permit exceptions designed to protect a woman's health. However, in *Doe v. Bolton*, a companion case that the Court said should "be read together" with *Roe*, the Court defined this exception so broadly that it essentially swallows the rule. As Clarke Forsythe, Senior Counsel at Americans United for Life explains, "Where *Roe* prevented any prohibition on abortion before viability, the *Doe* 'health' exception eliminated prohibitions after viability as well." Clarke D. Forsythe, *Abuse of Discretion: The Inside Story of Roe v. Wade* (New York: 2013).
- 2 "Pregnancy Centers Stand the Test of Time," The Charlotte Lozier Institute, 2020.
- 3 "Unsafe: America's Abortion Industry Endangers Women," Americans United for Life, 2021.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 "The New Leviathan: How Planned Parenthood Became Abortion, Inc.," Americans United for Life, 2015.
- 6 "Gestational Limits on Abortion in the United States Compared to International Norms," The Charlotte Lozier Institute, 2014.
- 7 "Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization: An Opportunity to Correct a Grave Error," The Heritage Foundation, 2021.
- 8 "Top 10 Myths About Abortion," Family Research Council and the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians & Gynecologists, 2019.
- 9 "Unsafe Abortion: More Information Needed for True Informed Consent," Charlotte Lozier Institute, March 4, 2013.
- 10 "Exposing the Pervasiveness of 'Back Alley' Abortions," by Denise M. Burke, Women's Protection Project, Americans United for Life, 2013.
- 11 Ibid.
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- 14 Byron C. Calhoun, M.D. and Mailee Smith, "Significant Potential Harm: Growing medical evidence of abortion's negative impact on women," *Defending Life 2013: Deconstructing Roe: Abortion's Negative Impact on Women*, Americans United for Life (Washington, D.C.: 2013).
- 15 Charmaine Yoest, Ph.D. "Batgirl v. Baby Girl," *Defending Life 2013: Deconstructing Roe: Abortion's Negative Impact on Women*, Americans United for Life (Washington, D.C.: 2013).
- 16 "2019-2020 Annual Report," Planned Parenthood Federation of America.
- 17 "Fact Sheet: Planned Parenthood's 2019-20 Annual Report," The Charlotte Lozier Institute, 2021.
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- 20 Ibid.
- 21 "Planned Parenthood's Waste, Abuse, and Potential Fraud," Alliance Defending Freedom, April 10, 2013.
- 22 "Texas Attorney General's Office Obtains \$1.4 Million Settlement against Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast for Medicaid Fraud," Office of Attorney General of Texas, July 24, 2013.
- 23 "The 'Hard Cases' of Abortion: A Pro-life Response," Family Research Council, 2000.
- 24 "Gestational Limits on Abortion in the United States Compared to International Norms," The Charlotte Lozier Institute, 2014.
- 25 Helen Alvaré, Greg Pfundstein, Matthew Schmitz and Ryan T. Anderson, "The Lazy Slander of the Pro-Life Cause," *Public Discourse*, January 17, 2011.
- 26 "Pregnancy Centers Stand the Test of Time," The Charlotte Lozier Institute, 2020 .