

Students Tackle the Abortion Issue

Pro:

by Melissa Hammer

One of the most frequently argued moral issues of our time is the issue of abortion. Since the Supreme Court decision in the case of Roe vs. Wade (1974), which turned the matter of abortion over to the states, there has been a controversy as to whether or not abortion should be legal.

The Catholic Church has said "no" to abortion. But the church has also had some strong objections to premarital sex and homosexuality - choices which would otherwise appear to be individual, personal decisions, decisions in which the input of government is obviously unwelcome. Despite the separation of church and state, there is the campaign of various right-to-life organizations supported by and comprised mainly of Catholics. The goal of these organizations is to prove to the government and the states that abortion is murder.

But can the termination of life of an undeveloped, unwanted fetus be called murder? The pro-lifers argue that women are using abortion as a form of belated birth control. Belated or not, the goal should not be to do away with abortion entirely, but to better educate the public about birth control and safe sex. An abortion is a wiser choice than giving birth to an unwanted, resented child who will only grow up neglected and abused.

It is preposterous to allow an almost all male Supreme Court to make a decision that is clearly the right of a woman as an individual. And yet, this is where America now stands; men will be making rules defining the way that women are to live their lives. Perhaps considering the situation through the eyes of a frightened, pregnant teenaged girl would help these people to put the decision in perspective.

A woman should have the right to make personal choices regarding her life and her body. The government should neither attempt to deprive women of this right nor condone abortion as a form of birth control. It should, however, continue to allow women the right to choose whether or not abortion conflicts with their morals and beliefs. If a woman does believe that abortion is in agreement with her moral standards she should not be forced to have an illegal, back-alley abortion that could cause a fatal infection or render her infertile. She should have the option of a clean, safe abortion if she so chooses. But the choice should always be there - and the choice should always be hers.

Abortion: Is it the woman's choice?

Each year 1.6 million abortions are performed in the U.S. In 1986, 30% percent of the abortions performed were on teenagers. Abortions pose many medical, social and moral issues which our society must confront.

There are two main factions regarding abortion: pro choice groups, advocates of legal abortion, and right-to-life groups, made up of anti-abortionists. The pro choice movement supports the belief that pregnant women have the right to choose whether to have an abortion or not. They claim that this is a personal decision and cannot be made by anyone except the people involved. Those who support right-to-life groups believe that abortion is killing a life and abortion violates the Fourteenth Amendment right that "no person shall ... be deprived of life ... without due process of law."

On January 22, 1973, the Supreme Court of the United States set the precedent for abortion rulings in two decisions: Roe vs. Wade and Doe vs. Bolton. The rulings legalized abortion and opened public fundings to aid such health care. At the present time twenty seven states have laws which refuse to give financial aid for abortions and two states (Arkansas and Missouri) have amendments making abortion illegal. As cases pend on the legality of many of these laws, many believe the ultimate decision will come from the Supreme Court. With three of the four justices who support pro choice being in their 80's, many foresee the prohibition of abortion in the near future. As a major issue affecting young adults in a modern society, abortion is a problem which must be discussed.

Con:

by Simon Chin

Children are being murdered. Throughout the United States, abortions are taking place due to ignorance and "bad luck." Although the children may be unwanted, it is a moral crime to kill a baby. Many people don't regard the unborn fetus as a human being; that's how they justify the abortions. However, a fetus is merely a developmental stage for the human being; and here it's still a faction of the human race.

A baby is perhaps the most innocent, innocuous being on the planet. Killing an unborn child is heinous. The Constitution gives people the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. A baby has not yet experienced life's vicissitudes and has never achieved his/her goals. The baby will never have taken its first step. Homicide results in years of prison; in a few cases, the electric chair. How can the government deter homicide when they are indifferent about abortion, a form of homicide? This seems to be an example of hypocrisy. The proverb "practice what you preach" has been stated often. It should be followed.

Imagine this — a world without an Einstein, Napoleon, George Washington, or a Martin Luther King Jr. The fetus that is dispatched from his mother could be the future president of the United States. Geniuses and world leaders are hard to come by; can we afford to bring the gene pool lower? What would have happened if your mother had been aborted? In the past, abortion was illegal in predominantly Catholic countries. Although the world has changed, morals should basically remain the same. It is our responsibility to take care of our children.

Man has made remarkable advances in diverse areas to improve the condition of his life. Awe-inspiring technology is abundant throughout the world. Man has become strong enough to wipe out a planet, go to space, and be virtually ubiquitous. Has technological advancement been reciprocated for human advancement? Of course, people may argue that abortion should be left as an alternative for those who do not desire babies because the parents to be might not be able to afford a baby or do not want to get married. But, it is better to have the baby and offer it for adoption than to murder it. We must consider how hundreds of individuals anxious to adopt a child. Life is the most priceless gift in the universe. Is it ours to throw away?

What the Country Thinks

- 76% of Americans believe abortion should be legal.
- 90% of Americans favor legal abortions if the woman's health is at stake.
- 83% of Americans approve of abortion in the case of rape.
- 83% of Americans favor abortion when the fetus is abnormal or likely to suffer from a disability.
- 52% of Americans support abortion if the family is poor.
- 48% of Americans believe abortion should be legal if the women is single.
- 47% of Americans support abortion if a women is married and doesn't want more children.
- 42% of Americans favor abortions for any reason.

From *The Abortion Controversy* by Carol Emmens.

The Student Verdict

How should the government handle the issue of abortion?

Jon Shields
Freshman



The government should let females make their own choice. The women are the ones going through this ordeal, not the government; they have a right to privacy when it's dealing with their own body.

Vinnie Dello-Iacono
Sophomore



Abortion should only be legalized in certain situations. For example, if a girl is raped or if going through with the pregnancy could be vital to the mother's health. Many times abortion is used as a birth control method; in fact, it is killing.

James Beaudreau
Senior



I feel that abortion should be legalized under certain conditions only, such as rape. I don't feel that it is a topic that should be taken lightly as it may be taken now. Abortion should not be used as a method of birth control.

Eric Evans
Junior



I think that the government should make abortion legal. I don't feel that having an abortion is a way of taking someone's life. You're dealing with an unborn infant who perhaps does not have a great chance of life anyway, considering the parent did not want him/her, for some reason, to begin with.

Meredith Korman
Freshman



I think that it should be legalized because it determines the rest of a woman's life; therefore, it should be up to them. Also if a woman is raped they do not want to remember the tragedy that occurred. Having the baby and then giving it up for adoption is not always easy.

Lea Kimmel
Junior



I don't feel they have the right to decide what's wrong or right in dealing with the life of a woman's unborn child. Certain circumstances call for abortion, others do not. Either way it is the woman's decision. I do not feel the government has the authority to take away this right.