This statement is somewhat accurate. There is no conclusive way to determine when life begins. However, the conclusion is still accurate; the government should still allow abortions. The intricacies of gestation and the vagueness of what defines life make putting a date on it impossible and thus useless for policy making. However, even if life did begin at conception, the mother's bodily autonomy still trumps a fetus's right to life.

Opinions on when life begins vary widely. Many people believe it starts at conception when the egg is fertilized, initiating gestation. Others argue for gastrulation, the stage where embryonic cells begin to specialize; twins can no longer be formed, and the embryo's identity starts forming. Another viewpoint ties life's beginning to brain development, mainly when brain activity is similar to an adult's. Viability, the stage when a fetus can survive outside the uterus with medical support, is also a key milestone, though its exact timing depends on the advancements in medical technology. Each of these perspectives reflects different beliefs about the definition of life, making a universal agreement challenging due to the lack of a clear, scientifically validated starting point for life.

Another important note is that many arguments for when life begins also reference the importance of the potential for life. For example, when people argue for fertilization, they say that the embryo has the potential for life, which holds just as much moral weight as actual life. However, this argument falls short when extended. If a fertilized egg has the potential for life, then so should the unfertilized egg and sperm, which would mean that menstruation and any ejaculation for non-fertilization reasons would be murder. That is absurd and invalidates the arguments based on the potential for life.

The impossibility of defining when life begins and that potential for life does not hold any bearing means that the first part of the statement is invalid and irrelevant. No definitive scientific or philosophical argument proves that life begins at fertilization, and we do not know enough about what life is to answer that question. Also, the statement says that life begins at conception legally, but that argument is flimsy because it is currently left up to the states to decide that, so it varies from area to area. All of this essentially means that there is no use in trying to decide when life begins, and instead, we should look to another place to decide whether or not abortions should be allowed.

Judith Thompson, in her paper "A Defense of Abortion," avoids debating on when life begins and instead grants for the sake of argument that life does begin at fertilization. This allows Thompson to argue for abortion purely from a bodily autonomy perspective. The traditional pro-life argument that Thompson argues against is this: Every person has a right to life, a fetus is a person, a mother has bodily autonomy, a person's right to life trumps another's bodily autonomy, so a fetus must not be killed, and therefore, abortions must not be performed.

From here, Thompson uses an analogy to point out the absurdity of that argument. She proposes a situation where a world-famous violinist is found to have a fatal kidney disease, and his fans have found that you are the only person with the right blood type to save him. So they kidnap you and plug your circulatory system into his. When you wake up, the situation is explained to you, and you are told that it will take nine months for the violinist to survive on his own, but during that time, you have to stay plugged into him. Do you have a moral obligation to stay plugged in?

The answer to this analogy is obvious: you do not have to stay plugged in. It is nice to do, but you should not have to. However, if you apply the premises of the pro-life argument laid out earlier, you would be morally required to stay plugged in, as you would be valuing your bodily autonomy over someone else's right to life. This suggests that we do not always value life over autonomy.

An argument against abortion from Don Marquis's "Why Abortion is Immoral" uses a similar strategy to Thompson. He also ignores the whole debate on when life begins and changes the conversation. Marquis defines an idea of "a future like ours." He says the reason people do not kill or harm each other is because it deprives them of a future like ours; everyone deserves to live out their lives like we do. His argument states that because a fetus, no matter when life begins, has a future like ours, and it is always wrong to kill something with a future like ours, then it is immoral to kill a fetus, and abortions should be banned.

The problem with Marquis's argument is that he is only pretending to avoid the question of when life begins; all he has done is rephrase it to ask when a "future like ours" begins. His argument fails in the same way the potential for life argument does; if you accept his argument, you would also have to accept that all sperm and eggs have a future like ours and, therefore, cannot be killed.

The abortion debate is separate from the unresolved question of life's beginning. With no definitive answer to when life starts, government policy should instead focus on the rights of the living. Prioritizing pregnant individuals' bodily autonomy acknowledges the issue's complexity while respecting existing lives' tangible rights and freedoms. This approach balances ethical considerations without being hindered by the philosophical ambiguity of when life begins.