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## Hippocratic law for medical professionals

*"I will use my power to help the sick to the best of my ability and judgment. I will abstain from harming or wrong doing any man by it. I will not give a fatal draught to anyone if I am asked, nor will I suggest any such thing. Neither will I give a woman means to procure an abortion." - from the Hippocratic Oath (Hippocratic Oath - Philippine Medical Association)*

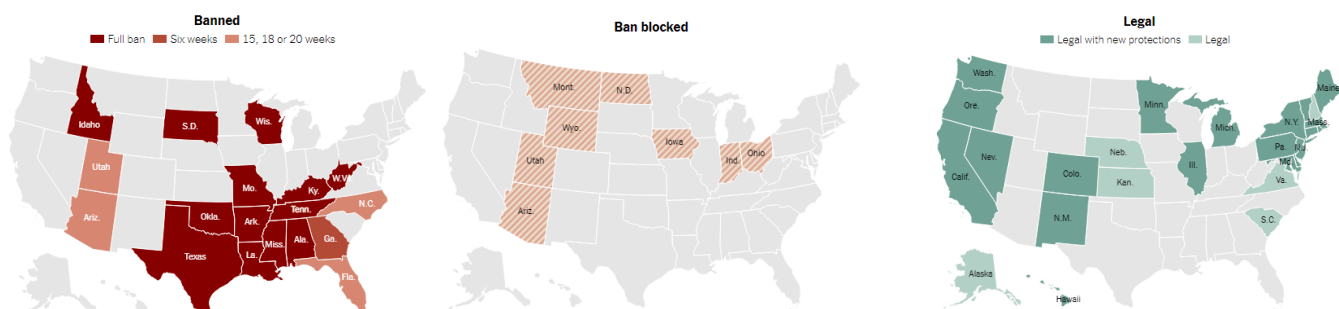
The Hippocratic Oath is an ancient Greek ethical code that outlines a set of principles and values for medical professionals. While the oath is not a legal or binding document, it has had a profound impact on the practice of medicine and continues to influence medical ethics today.

One of the core tenets of the Hippocratic Oath is the principle of "first, do no harm." This principle emphasizes the importance of avoiding actions that could cause harm to a patient. When it comes to abortion, some argue that it violates this principle because it involves intentionally ending the life of a fetus, which many consider to be a human life.

Additionally, the Hippocratic Oath includes a commitment to upholding the sanctity of life. This commitment is often interpreted to mean that medical professionals should do everything in their power to preserve and protect life. Some argue that this commitment is incompatible with the practice of abortion, which involves intentionally ending a life.

However, it's worth noting that the Hippocratic Oath is an ancient document that was written in a different time and cultural context. Today, many medical professionals interpret the oath more broadly and recognize that it's possible to uphold the principles of the oath while still supporting a woman's right to choose whether or not to have an abortion. Ultimately, the ethics of abortion are complex and deeply personal, and different people will interpret the Hippocratic Oath in different ways.

## Legality of Abortion in the context of states



U.S. states and the legality of abortion (The New York Times, *Tracking the states where abortion is now banned* 2022).

In states, such as 13 U.S. states in the figure above, and the Philippines, that do not legalize abortion, many argue that the practice is unethical because it violates the law and the societal norms that dictate the value of human life. Additionally, in

states where abortion is illegal, women who seek abortions may be forced to resort to unsafe and unregulated methods that can result in serious health complications or even death. This is because when abortion is illegal, women may not have access to the medical care and resources they need to undergo the procedure safely. However, others argue that in some cases, it may be ethical to provide access to safe and legal abortions in states where they are illegal, as doing so could help to protect women's health and well-being.

### **Age of consent**

In most countries, the age of consent is the age at which a person is considered legally competent to give informed consent to sexual activity. However, when it comes to decisions about reproductive health, including abortion, the laws and regulations governing consent can be more complex. In some places, minors may be required to obtain parental consent or undergo counseling before they can obtain an abortion, while in other places they may be allowed to make the decision on their own. The question of whether or not teenagers should be allowed to consent to abortion without the involvement of a parent or guardian is a highly debated and controversial issue, with opinions ranging widely. Supporters of teenage abortion rights argue that teenagers have the right to make decisions about their own bodies, and that denying them access to abortion can be detrimental to their health and well-being. Others, however, argue that teenagers are not yet fully mature or informed enough to make such important decisions on their own, and that parental involvement is necessary to ensure that the best interests of the teenager are being protected. The decision about whether or not to allow teenagers to consent to abortion on their own should be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the specific circumstances of each individual.

### **The verdict**

Abortion is a highly debated and controversial issue, and its ethical implications can vary depending on the legal and cultural context in which it takes place. The judgment on the ethics of the two physicians in the situation is still debatable as there are several unknown factors revolving the case. Looking into the conditions separately, for instance, if abortion was conducted in one of the U.S. states that banned abortion or in the Philippines, this is a clear violation of state laws, and is therefore deemed unethical. On the age of consent, if such teenager in the second situation is below the legal age of consent, then the physician made an explicitly unethical decision. Despite all the presented arguments, the major deciding factor lies on its influence on human life, such as that of the mother: whether the benefits of undergoing an abortion in terms of the health and safety of the mother outweighs the contesting harms and arguments presented in the medical context, as ethical laws were made to protect and defend life. In the absence of any medically endangering or life-threatening circumstances, any form of abortion is unethical. Ultimately, the ethics of abortion in states where it is illegal is a complex and highly contested issue that depends on a range of cultural, social, and political factors.

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