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ENG 1022-16A

18 September 2025

The Choice of Abortion Isn't So Simple

The right to abortion, or termination of a pregnancy, has been a heavily debated issue for decades in the United States. Discussions, particular events, and legislation have all intensified in the last few years, particularly with the overruling in 2022 of *Roe v. Wade* - a past Supreme Court decision that had federally guaranteed said right. The issue is undoubtedly complicated, with medical, religious, moral, and economic angles all talking points in its debates. However one may view abortion, there is simply too much situational nuance for a heavy-handed law to decide its authorization. Therefore, regardless of the population's moral or religious views, and because of the presence of medical realities, patients' choice to proceed with an abortion should be protected under the law.

First, there are many medical reasons for why someone would want an abortion. Strictly within the womb, a variety of complications can happen; life-threatening fetal anomalies and miscarriages are two examples (Sawhill and Smith). Ectopic pregnancies, where a fetus grows outside of the uterus and usually causes internal bleeding, are another example (Sawhill and Smith). In these cases, an abortion is a preventative measure in situations where the mother would otherwise suffer severe injury or death. On a different note, those who proceed with abortions take on a higher risk of breast cancer and possible infertility (Americans United). Although this is a valid consideration, "The Pro-Life View on Abortion" in its argument fails to address problems that would arise if an abortion were denied. These potential risks cannot be

used to argue against the right for abortions due to the more grave and dangerous nature of gestational complications.

Second, contrary to certain groups' perspectives, motivations for abortion do not predominantly originate from promiscuity. Unintended pregnancies are often mistimed - that is, women may have initially wanted to rear a child, but had later decided not to for reasons such as finances, other children, issues with a partner, or work and educational conflicts (Sawhill and Smith). Additionally, more than half of abortion patients had already given birth to one or more children (Sawhill and Smith). Furthermore, those who are denied abortions face worse economic outcomes; these women are almost four times more likely to enter poverty, and are also more likely to face unemployment and rely on welfare (Sawhill and Smith). Abortion is not a decision made on a whim, either - women take time to both decide and arrange for one (Sawhill and Smith). The weight of such a decision is reinforced by the risk of patients suffering mental trauma (Americans United). On the other side, the anti-abortion perspective underscores the notion that those who abort do so in the "pursuit of happiness" (Americans United). However, this position fails to take into account the many considerations that women take, often for their unborn children, before going through with an abortion. It additionally discounts the morality of those who decide to abort by distilling the act to "taking a life" in all cases and pitting it as a mere pursuit of happiness (Americans United). By the data, this is certainly not the case for many women.

Third, the point about abortion's equivalence to taking a life is too dependent on subjectivity and personal opinion. Many who oppose abortion cite the beginning of a heartbeat at 5 weeks of gestation, and the beginning of movement at 8 weeks (Americans United). Some further assert that a baby's life has inherent dignity and worth from conception, and emphasize

their protection (Americans United). These are valid points with good intentions. However, what constitutes “life” is highly variable; in this view, biology coincides with morality, and possibly spirituality. The article also relies heavily on the future and life potential (Americans United). That is to say, the definition of a life is a human construct, and subject to personal interpretation - it is not suitable for an overarching, prohibitive law to be based off of. Furthermore, in emphasizing the importance of protecting life, “The Pro-Life View on Abortion” fails to consider potential repercussions from the denial of abortions. As previously stated, there are medical situations where an abortion is the only choice to prevent a patient’s death. Additionally, even if a baby is carried to term and delivered, certain environments could cause them to suffer in their upbringing; low incomes and poverty, lack of a father, and neglect are all possible scenarios for mothers (Sawhill and Smith). Neglect often displays itself when unready individuals such as teenagers are forced to deliver, or when conception is caused by incest or sexual assault; these situations can consequently lead to infant mortality (Sawhill and Smith). Additionally, enforcement against abortion has been linked to increases in partner violence and homicides, which take both the lives of the mother and baby (Sawhill and Smith). In many of the 14 states (as of May 2024) where abortion is fully banned, exceptions are not given for multiple of these various situations (Sawhill and Smith). Therefore, in lieu of the *Roe v. Wade* protections, these states’ ordinances are contributing to the antithesis of what they aim to promote - life.

Overall, the sentiments echoed by “The Pro-Life View on Abortion” have good intentions at their roots. However, in its arguments, it fails to consider several facets that motivate - and sometimes require - abortions during pregnancies. Due to the myriad of medical, economic, and societal reasons for abortions to be carried out, these opinions should not be carried into wide-sweeping legislation that restricts them. There is simply too much nuance among individual

situations across millions of pregnancies; a law that restricts all abortions will inevitably injure and take lives, contrary to its motivation. Therefore, those who are pregnant should have the choice to proceed with an abortion if needed, and this choice should be protected under the law.

Works Cited

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