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Overview:

The article “Disability-based abortion is lethal discrimination” written by Lila Rose and Daniel Grade, opinion contributors for The Hill, outlines an outlook that suggests abortions based on disabilities is inherently discriminatory. The article starts by describing how current advances in technology/medical fields have allowed health professionals a much stronger insight into the prenatal conditions of many patients. Although these technologies are used to “prepare a couple with a potentially high-risk pregnancy” (Paragraph 1) it is stated that these “life-saving advances are not always matched by caring and informed advice” (Paragraph 2). The subsequent paragraphs of the article reveal how “doctors ... recommend that babies with disabilities pay the ultimate price of abortion” (Paragraph 2). To support their claims of miss-informed advice, the article uses stats from 1998 to 2011 where “67 percent of women who received positive prenatal diagnoses” (Paragraph 3) still chose disability-based abortion. In paragraph 6, the claim is made that House Bill 1337(Indiana Law) was challenged by the abortion industry where the “Supreme Court declined to hear the appeal” (Paragraph 6). In their eyes, the Supreme court’s declination “signaled to people with disabilities that they are merely partial citizens” (Paragraph 6). Using the testimony of Justice Clarence Thomas “This Law... promotes a State’s compelling interest in preventing abortion from becoming a tool of modern-day eugenics” affirming their strong stance that disability-based abortions are discriminatory. The article concludes with Frank Stephens familiar quote “Whatever you learn today, please remember this: I am a man with Down syndrome and my life is worth living” (Paragraph 8) as well as stressing the importance of

understanding that the “ableist mentality” (Paragraph 10) is leading to a genocide of unjustified abortions.

Identification of Ethical Concepts and Theories:

This article describes strongly in their view, the immorality of disability-based abortion. The main ethical concepts that propagate throughout the entirety of the reading are; Honesty and Equality. The importance of honesty is expressed when describing the roles and responsibilities of health professionals and physicians. The authors perceive physicians/health professional recommending abortion of babies with disabilities to be dishonest advice. The article categorizes this dishonesty due to the author’s beliefs that “people with [disabilities] ...routinely live happy, fulfilled lives” (Paragraph 3). The ethical concept of equality is the underlying theme of the article. The author’s views on abortion equality is stated as “laws protecting people against discrimination based on their disability are robust in areas like housing and employment, but woefully inadequate in the womb” (Paragraph 4). The article does not give a firm stance on abortion all together but vibrantly expresses how those with prenatal disabilities should not be treated in any way different than other unborn able children.

As like many opinion pieces, this article comes with its fair share of theoretical assumptions too. The first being that doctors who suggest abortion as a possible option are intentionally misleading their patients. Each case must be examined uniquely with all possible factors given before determining the sincerity of each physician giving medical advice. The same line a logic applies when examining the claim that “67 percent of women who receive a positive prenatal diagnosis for Down syndrome had an abortion” (Paragraph 3) as we are unaware of any other factors that attribute to that outcome. Another assumption occurs when determining the causation

behind the Supreme Court declining the appeal of House bill 1337. The authors state “In declining to hear the appeal, the Supreme Court signaled to people with disabilities that they are merely partial citizens” (Paragraph 6). There may be a multitude of reasons for the Supreme Court’s appeals decline, such as improper paperwork or unseen factors. An ableist mentality being inherently wrong when the authors say, “We must respond to the ableist mentality that is leading to the genocide of children with special needs” (Paragraph 10) is an assumption to the goals of able-bodied persons. It is fair to say someone of able stature may lack some empathy when dealing with the disabled but to attribute able-bodied persons to the “genocide of children with special needs” is an assumption.

Critical Assessment:

The ethical theory that is most consistent with this article is Virtue ethics. Virtue ethics “Focuses on the moral development, and the creation of virtuous agents through proper education and inspiration” (L 1. Introduction to Biomedical Ethics, and Ethical Theories). This resonates with the views of the authors because virtue ethics generally focuses on *good character*. The article makes point of grading persons based on character when judging both the doctors who suggested disability-based abortion and women for going through with said abortion suggested or unsuggested. The article is very eudemonistic in nature due to the fact it holds the “right action” as no disability-based abortion which in the author’s view will lead to the well-being of the individual (disabled baby). Therefore holding “well-being” as an essential value.

If the authors wanted to improve the article, they should have added to the ethical concepts, Justice and Beneficence. Justice could have been used when describing the physicians that

nefariously encourage disability-based abortion as they should be held accountable for their actions. Beneficence describes charity, mercy, kindness and could have been expressed by conveying the importance of able-bodied persons to have kindness and mercy when dealing the with mentally/physically disabled.

In conclusion, the article “Disability-based abortion is lethal discrimination” written by Lila Rose and Daniel Grade, explores the ethical legitimacy of disability-based abortion using common virtue ethics practice to try and express the importance of non-discrimination on behalf of the disabled community.

Bibliography;

Lila Rose and Daniel Gade, opinion contributors. "Disability-Based Abortion Is Lethal Discrimination." *TheHill*, The Hill, 9 Aug. 2019, thehill.com/opinion/healthcare/456841-disability-based-abortion-is-lethal-discrimination. [Accessed Oct 21]