

# Sharing the Pro-Life Message



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the Message

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Abortion  
Facts

Pro-Choice  
Arguments

Questions  
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Planned  
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**PRO-LIFE ACTION LEAGUE**

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## HOW TO SHARE THE PRO-LIFE MESSAGE

Have you ever been in a situation like one of these?

- *At the summer block party, a neighbor asks about the pro-life bumper sticker on your car.*
- *Your professor speaks out during class about being pro-choice, as if no one with any intelligence could possibly oppose abortion.*
- *At Thanksgiving dinner, your sister-in-law casually mentions that she just sent a donation to Planned Parenthood.*
- *During a pro-life demonstration you're participating in, a passer-by walks over to you and angrily asks what right you have to tell other people how to live.*
- *A co-worker confides that her niece just found out she's pregnant, and the family is pressuring her to get an abortion.*

If you've ever had to explain or defend the pro-life message—with family, friends, co-workers, classmates, neighbors or complete strangers—then you are on the front lines of the pro-life movement. And this handbook is for you.

This pro-life handbook arms you with the facts, figures, and reasoned arguments you need to share the pro-life message with compassion and conviction.

## What is the pro-life message?

Before going on to discuss how to most effectively share the pro-life message, perhaps we should ask, “What is the pro-life message?”

At its most basic level, the pro-life message is this: An unborn child is a human person whose life has value and deserves to be protected by our society.

But we also have an important message to share about how abortion harms women—and men—and about how committed the pro-life movement is to helping women face untimely pregnancies and choose life for their babies.



Ultimately, our message is a message of hope. We believe that, working together, we can transform our society into a place in which no mother will ever resort to abortion, and where every child, regardless of the circumstances of his or her conception, will be welcomed and loved.

## Why does this handbook use the term “pro-choice”?

The purpose of this handbook is to enable you to engage in meaningful dialog about abortion with anyone, including those who are strong advocates of legal abortion. For that reason, the handbook uses terminology that will not derail the conversation before it can even get started—like calling those who support legal abortion “pro-choice.”

Many pro-lifers refuse to use the term “pro-choice,” saying it’s nothing more than a euphemism for “pro-abortion.” This may be true, but it’s really beside the point. Calling someone who thinks abortion should be legal “pro-abortion” will only get you sidetracked into a long debate about labels.

The information and arguments in this handbook lose none of their force if you indulge those who support legal abortion in their desire to be called “pro-choice.” They may even return the favor and agree to call you “pro-life”—without getting into a lengthy debate about war, the death penalty, or gun control.

## 10 guidelines for sharing the pro-life message

When most people think of the abortion issue, they think of confrontation. We have to change that. Instead of confrontation, we must seek conversation—and ultimately conversion. It is not enough to have the right information. We must also have the right attitude.

If the pro-life message is a message of hope, then we who are called to share that message must present it with a spirit of peace. The following ten guidelines will help you adopt a peaceful way of sharing the pro-life message, and enable you to be much more successful in winning hearts and minds to our cause.

### **1. Listen—and pay attention.**

If you're going to effectively share the pro-life message, you have to start by listening to what the opposition is saying. You may think you've heard it all before, and maybe you have, but if you don't really listen, you'll only turn off those you're trying to reach.

The pro-choice person you're talking to deserves to know that you are really paying attention to what they have to say. And if the conversation begins with hostility—for example, an angry student stopping to complain about the pro-life display

you're hosting on campus—there's no better way to calm things down than to patiently listen.

This also means using body language that shows you are paying attention. Look the person in the eye, nod to show understanding and assume a relaxed posture with your arms close to your body.

## **2. Take time to think—and pray.**

You're not on your own when you're having a discussion about abortion. The Holy Spirit is there too. Offer a prayer for inspiration—that you will really hear what this pro-choice person is saying, that you will find the right words to say in response, and that you will open the door for conversion.

## **3. Always be respectful.**

Unfortunately, there are some in the pro-life movement who undermine their sincere efforts to explain why abortion is so wrong by failing to treat their pro-choice opponents with respect. There's never a good reason for treating someone with disrespect, least of all when you're dealing with a matter of life and death like abortion.

To help establish a respectful spirit, share your first name, and ask the pro-choice person theirs.

## **4. Seek common ground.**

Try to find something that you and your pro-choice opponent can agree on. Perhaps you can

agree that more needs to be done to help women facing untimely pregnancy. Or that abortion is a painful decision that nobody makes casually. Or that partial birth abortion should not be legal.

This agreement becomes the first step in building a relationship. You can build on that common ground as you continue to discuss the abortion issue. Even agreeing about something trivial like a favorite TV show can help make your conversation more fruitful.

### **5. Make it personal.**

Speak from the heart, from your own experience—even when talking about facts and figures. Instead of simply stating, for example, that the fetal heartbeat can be detected 18-24 days after conception, share your experience of learning this fact: “I remember how amazed I was when I learned . . .”

### **6. Give the benefit of the doubt, and never take offense.**

Discussions about abortion can become very heated. In fact, they almost always will, unless you work hard to keep that from happening. No matter how angry, rude or upset your opponent may become, you must absolutely refuse to take offense or nurse an insult.

Always give the benefit of the doubt, starting with considering all the questions and comments you

hear to be sincere, even if you can detect a cynical or sneering tone. Never tell a pro-choice person that they “don’t really care about women” or “don’t want to know the truth”, and never tell someone who opposes abortion but doesn’t share your commitment that they’re “not really pro-life”.

## **7. Don’t interrupt others’ conversations.**

Never interrupt a fellow pro-lifer’s conversation with an opponent, no matter how tempting it may be. You may think you have better information, but butting into the conversation will do more harm than good, especially if the pro-choice person feels ganged up on.

Instead of interrupting, silently offer a prayer that the conversation will be fruitful. And if you can do so without being disruptive, you may want to pass on a copy of this handbook to your pro-life friend.

## **8. Pick your battles and keep it simple.**

When talking to people on the other side of the abortion issue, you will often find yourself pummeled with objection after objection—What about a woman who’s raped? What about a child who would face a life of abuse and misery? What about the death penalty? You may only get out a few words in response to one question before another one is raised.

It is important at a time like this to stay focused on one or two key issues. You can even say some-

thing like, “I’d love to address all your questions, and I’ll do my best, but for the moment maybe we could focus on . . .” Pick a central topic—like the humanity of the unborn child or the harm that abortion does to women—and try to stick to it.

### **9. Admit when you lack information.**

This handbook will give you all the critical information you need to answer pro-choice questions and share the pro-life message, but if you ever find yourself lacking a piece of information or confronted with a question you can’t answer, admit it. Not only does this show how fair and reasonable you are, but it leaves open the possibility of revisiting the topic on another occasion.

### **10. Always leave the door open.**

Your goal must never be to convince the pro-choice person that you’re right and they’re wrong. If you walk away, thinking, “I really put him in his place!” you’ve probably failed to open any doors for the pro-life movement.

If you can’t change this person’s mind—and you rarely will do so on the spot—you can at least begin to build a relationship that you or another pro-lifer can build upon in the future. You can open doors for future conversion.

To help make this possible, always conclude your discussion by thanking the pro-choice individual for taking the time to talk to you.

## How to use this handbook

This handbook is divided into six main sections, each with a color coded “tab” in the margin to help you quickly find the information you need to share the pro-life message. In addition to this introduction on HOW TO SHARE THE MESSAGE, you will find sections on LIFE IN THE WOMB, ABORTION FACTS, PRO-CHOICE ARGUMENTS, QUESTIONS OF LAW, PLANNED PARENTHOOD and GETTING HELP. You will also find a page of resources at the very end of the handbook.

Familiarize yourself with the content in this handbook by reading through all the sections. This will help you find what you’re looking for when you really need it.

You never know when you might have the opportunity to share the pro-life message, so keep this handbook with you. Pull it out from time to time to review all the pro-life facts and arguments—especially when you’re taking part in any kind of pro-life event.

Share this handbook with your pro-life friends. Let them know they can get a copy of this handbook at **SharingTheProLifeMessage.com**. You can also order copies of the handbook in bulk at low cost.

The facts and figures in this handbook are up-to-date as of publication in February 2011. For the latest data, visit **ProLifeAction.org**.

## LIFE IN THE WOMB

Some of the most impactful pieces of pro-life information you can share are the details of the development of human life in the womb. Try to memorize as much of this information as you can.

In this section, use of the word “baby” has been avoided, because this word presupposes the very thing you’re trying to show—the humanity of the unborn—and it may make a staunch abortion supporter tune out the information you’re trying to share.

Of course, there may be times when you’re talking to someone who will respond positively to hearing about “the baby’s heartbeat”; in such a case, you should feel free to modify your language.

Please note that embryonic and fetal development is presented here by referring to days or weeks after conception, which may be different from the less precise “weeks of pregnancy” typically used by obstetricians, which are calculated from the mother’s last menstrual period (LMP).

## When does life begin?

Biology is clear that at conception, also known as fertilization, a unique organism comes into existence. Since this new life possesses human DNA and is the offspring of human parents, it can only legitimately be described as human life.

Since there is no question that human zygotes, embryos and fetuses are alive, some have attempted to claim that human beings are not “persons” until some threshold is crossed, such as viability, the capacity to feel pain, birth, or even the first year after birth. The merits of such notions could be debated, but it should be clear that they are not based on science but rather on ideology, philosophy, or belief.

As far as observable science is concerned, human life begins at conception.

*Source: Condic, Maureen, MD. When Does Human Life Begin? A Scientific Perspective. The Westchester Institute for Ethics and the Human Person. [http://www.westchesterinstitute.net/images/wi\\_whitepaper\\_life\\_print.pdf](http://www.westchesterinstitute.net/images/wi_whitepaper_life_print.pdf).*

## What happens at conception?

At conception, a male sperm unites with a female ovum (egg). The single-celled human organism formed by the fusion of sperm and egg is known as a zygote.

*Source: Condic, Maureen, MD. When Does Human Life Begin? A Scientific Perspective. The Westchester Institute for Ethics and the Human Person. [http://www.westchesterinstitute.net/images/wi\\_whitepaper\\_life\\_print.pdf](http://www.westchesterinstitute.net/images/wi_whitepaper_life_print.pdf).*

## What is the difference between “fertilization” and “implantation?”

Fertilization, also known as conception, is described above, and occurs in the mother’s Fallopian tube. Implantation, which occurs eight to 10 days after fertilization, refers to the point at which the new human being (now scientifically referred to as an “embryo”) implants in the mother’s uterus and begins to draw nourishment.

*Source: Willke, John, MD and Barbara Willke. 2003. Abortion: Questions & Answers. Cincinnati: Hayes Publishing Company.*

## What are the various stages of development in the womb?

Many stages of prenatal development can be identified, especially in the early days and weeks of life when change takes place at an extremely rapid pace. The following are the primary stages:

- **Zygote**—A single-celled human being from fertilization until the first cell division
- **Embryo**—A human being from the time of the first cell division until approximately the eighth week of life
- **Fetus**—A human being from approximately the eighth week of life up until birth

To this list of stages of human development might be added: newborn, infant, toddler, child, adoles-

cent, adult and senior—the continuum of human life which begins with conception.

Prenatal development and pregnancy can also be divided into trimesters:

- **First Trimester**—From conception to approximately 12 weeks gestation
- **Second Trimester**—From approximately 13 through 26 weeks gestation
- **Third Trimester**—From approximately 27 weeks gestation to birth

## When does an embryo's heart begin to beat?

An embryo's heart begins to beat between 18-24 days after conception.

Source: Clowes, Brian, PhD. 2001. *The Facts of Life*. Front Royal: Human Life International.

## When can an embryo's brain waves be detected?

An embryo's brain waves can be detected six weeks after conception.

Source: Clowes, Brian, PhD. 2001. *The Facts of Life*. Front Royal: Human Life International.

Human life seven weeks  
from conception



## When do a fetus' fingernails begin to form?

By nine weeks after conception, a fetus' fingernails are forming.



Source: Clowes, Brian, PhD. 2001. The Facts of Life. Front Royal: Human Life International.

**Human life eight weeks from conception**

## When can a fetus feel pain?

Based on the development of the nervous system, a fetus is likely able to feel pain as early as 8 weeks after conception.



Source: Clowes, Brian, PhD. 2001. The Facts of Life. Front Royal: Human Life International.

**Human life eight weeks from conception**

## What are some of the other milestones of fetal development?

Other important milestones of fetal development include:

- At nine weeks after conception, a fetus is able to bend its fingers around an object in its hand, and sucks its thumb.
- At 11 weeks, a fetus is breathing amniotic fluid steadily and will do so until birth.
- At 12 weeks, a fetus can kick, turn over, make a fist, open its mouth and press its lips together.
- At 13 weeks, a fetus' vocal cords and auditory sense are present.
- At 20 weeks, a fetus can be startled by a loud external noise.
- At 23 weeks, a fetus can demonstrate rapid eye movements (REM).



Human life 16 weeks from conception



Human life 20 weeks from conception

- At six months, fine hair grows on the fetus' head and eyebrows, and small eyelashes begin to appear.
- At seven months, a fetus' hands can support his entire weight.



Human life 20 weeks  
from conception

- At eight months, a fetus weighs more than four pounds.
- During the ninth month from conception, a fetus gains half a pound per week. Of the 45 total generations of cell replication that will occur by mature adulthood, 41 have already taken place.

Source: Clowes, Brian, PhD. 2001. *The Facts of Life*. Front Royal: Human Life International.

## ABORTION METHODS, FACTS AND FIGURES

For many people, abortion is more of an idea than a hard reality. Often the most stalwart abortion proponents know little about how many abortions are actually performed in the United States, or what the principal abortion methods are. Learning the facts about abortion can lead to a change of heart about the morality of abortion.

Many of the statistics in this chapter are taken from the Guttmacher Institute, which is closely affiliated with Planned Parenthood, the largest abortion provider in the U.S. The Guttmacher Institute has been compiling data on abortion since 1968. Since they support legal abortion, the data they provide will have more credibility to those who are pro-choice than data from a pro-life source.

Another important source of abortion statistics is the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that has been compiling public health statistics since 1946. The CDC tracks the numbers on abortions performed each year based on data provided by each state.

- ▶ See also “**Questions of Law**” beginning on page 57 on how abortion became legal and related questions.

**Please note:** The following pages include graphic pictures of abortion.

## How many abortions are performed in the United States?

According to the Guttmacher Institute, there were 1.21 million abortions performed in the United States in 2008, the most recent year for which data is available. This amounts to 3,322 abortions per day.

The number of abortions performed in 2008 is slightly up from the number in 2005 (the next most recent year for which data is available):

**Total abortions in 2008: 1,212,350**

**Total abortions in 2005: 1,206,200**

This is an increase of over 6,000 abortions from 2005 to 2008.

*Source: Jones, Rachel K. and Kathryn Kooistra. "Abortion Incidence and Access to Services in the United States, 2008." Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health 43, no. 1 (2011, March): 41-50.  
<http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/4304111.pdf>.*

## How many abortions have been performed in the United States since it was legalized nationwide?

Since the legalization of abortion in 1973, there have been approximately 50 million abortions performed in the United States.

*Source: Guttmacher Institute. 2011, January. Facts on Induced Abortion in the United States. [http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb\\_induced\\_abortion.html](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html).*

## How old are the women having abortions?

The age breakdown of women having abortions, according to the Centers for Disease Control, is as follows:

**Less than 15 years: < 0.5%**

**Age 15-19: 16.5%**

**Age 20-24: 32.6%**

**Age 25-29: 24.1%**

**Age 30-34: 14.2%**

**Age 35-39: 8.9%**

**Age 40+: 3.2%**

This means that half of all abortions are performed on women 24 years old or younger.

*Source: Centers for Disease Control Surveillance Surveys. 2009, November 29. Abortion Surveillance—United States, 2006. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 58: SS-8 <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/ss/ss5808.pdf>.*

## What percentage of pregnancies end in abortion?

About 22% of all pregnancies end in abortion in the United States. There were 1.21 million abortions in 2008 compared to 4.25 million live births.

*Sources:*

*Centers for Disease Control. National Vital Statistics Reports. 2010, April 6. Births: Preliminary Data for 2008. [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr58/nvsr58\\_16.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr58/nvsr58_16.pdf).*

*Guttmacher Institute. 2011, January. Facts on Induced Abortion in the United States. [http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb\\_induced\\_abortion.html](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html).*

## What is the race/ethnicity of the women having abortions?

According to the Guttmacher Institute, abortion breaks down along racial/ethnic lines as follows:

**White: 36%**      **Hispanic: 25%**  
**Black: 30%**      **Other: 9%**

While blacks and Hispanics comprise only 29% of the population, they account for nearly 55% of all abortions. A black baby is five times as likely to be aborted as a white baby; a Hispanic baby is 2.5 times more likely to be aborted than a white baby.

Sources:

Guttmacher Institute. 2011, January. *Facts on Induced Abortion in the United States*. [http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb\\_induced\\_abortion.html](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html).

U.S. Census Bureau. *USA Quick Facts from the U.S. Census Bureau*. 2010, November 4. <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html>.

## How does economic status affect who has abortions?

Women living below the federal poverty line abort at a higher rate than women living above the poverty line. The Guttmacher Institute reports that a single woman below the poverty line (having an annual income of about \$11,000) is five times more likely to abort than a woman making at least \$22,000 per year.

Sources:

Guttmacher Institute. 2008, July. *Facts on Induced Abortion in the United States*. [http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb\\_induced\\_abortion.html](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html).

Guttmacher Institute. 2010, May. *Characteristics of U.S. Abortion Patients*, 2008. <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/US-Abortion-Patients.pdf>.

## How many abortions are performed at each stage of pregnancy?

Based on the age of the fetus, the breakdown of abortions is as follows:

Age of Fetus	Percentage	Yearly total
< 9 weeks	61.8%	749,232
9-10 weeks	17.1%	207,312
11-12 weeks	9.1%	110,324
13-15 weeks	6.6%	80,015
16-20 weeks	3.8%	46,069
21+ weeks	1.5%	18,185
All abortions	100%	1.21 million

This means that approximately 88% of abortions occur in the first trimester (first 12 weeks) of pregnancy.

Source: Guttmacher Institute, 2011, January. *Facts on Induced Abortion in the United States*. [http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb\\_induced\\_abortion.html](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html).

## How many abortion facilities are there in the United States?

According to recent a survey conducted by a national pro-life organization, there are 689 facilities specializing in abortion, commonly known as “abortion clinics.” The vast majority of abortions are performed at these facilities. In addition, many abortions are performed at hospitals and physicians’ offices, but a precise accounting of these locations is not available.

Source: Jones, Rachel K. and Kathryn Kooistra. “Abortion Incidence and Access to Services in the United States, 2008.” *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* 43, no. 1 (2011, March): 41-50, <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/4304111.pdf>.

## Why do women have abortions?

Research indicates that 98% of all abortions are related to issues of “personal choice.” The primary reasons women give for having an abortion include not feeling emotionally capable (32%) or financially capable (25%) of raising a child, and concern that having a child would drastically alter her life (16%).

A 2000-2001 study by the Guttmacher Institute also found that about half of women having abortions had been using contraception during the month they became pregnant; 16.9% of women claimed their contraceptives failed despite proper use.

- ▶ See also “**What percentage of all abortions are because of “hard cases?”**” below.

Sources:

Guttmacher Institute. 2011, January. *Facts on Induced Abortion in the United States*. [http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb\\_induced\\_abortion.html](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html).

Johnston, Wm. Robert. *Reasons given for having abortions in the United States*. <http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/policy/abortion/abreasons.html>.

## What percentage of all abortions are because of “hard cases”?

The three most frequently cited “hard cases” in which some argue abortion might be justified are rape, incest and protecting the life of the mother. However, women rarely report that they are seeking an abortion for any of these reasons:

**Rape: 0.3%**

**Incest: 0.03%**

**Protection of mother's life: 0.2%**

In other words, out of 1,000 women procuring abortion, only three cite rape as the primary reason, and only two cite protecting her life as the reason for the abortion. Out of 10,000 women procuring abortion, only three cite incest as a reason.

- ▶ See also “**Shouldn't abortion be legal in cases of rape and incest?**” on page 34 and “**Is abortion ever necessary to save a woman's life**” below.

Source: Johnston, Wm. Robert. *Reasons Given For Having Abortions In The United States*. <http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/policy/abortion/abreasons.html>.

## **Is abortion ever necessary to save a woman's life?**

Abortion is never necessary to save a woman's life. Four hundred and eighty physicians have signed a public declaration stating: “I agree that there is never a situation in the law or in the ethical practice of medicine where a preborn child's life need be intentionally destroyed by procured abortion for the purpose of saving the life of the mother.”

Source: American Life League. *Declaration: Protecting the Life of the Mother*. <http://all.org/article.php?id=10682>.

## What are the various methods of abortion?

Eight abortion methods are practiced in the U.S.:

**Suction (Vacuum) Aspiration**

**Dilation and Curettage (D&C)**

**Intracardiac Injection Abortion**

**Dilation and Evacuation (D&E)**

**Dilation and Extraction (D&X or Partial-Birth Abortion)**

**Instillation (Saline) Abortion**

**Prostaglandin Abortion**

**Chemical (Medical) Abortion**

Each of these methods is described in detail below.

## How is a suction (vacuum) aspiration abortion performed?

Suction aspiration, the most common abortion method, is typically performed when the fetus is 6-12



**Abortion at 10 weeks.**  
Photo courtesy of the  
Center for Bioethical  
Reform.

weeks, but can be used up to 16 weeks. The cervix is dilated, and a hollow plastic tube with a sharp tip is inserted into the cervix and then into the uterus. An aspirator attached to the tube tears the body of the fetus apart and suctions the pieces through the tube.

*Source: Willke, John, MD and Barbara Willke. 2003. Abortion: Questions & Answers. Cincinnati: Hayes Publishing Company.*

## How is a D&C abortion performed?

In a D&C (dilation and curettage) abortion, typically performed in the first trimester, a curette (a sharp looped knife) is inserted into the uterus to scrape its walls. The curette is then used to dismember the fetus and placenta.

Source: Willke, John, MD and Barbara Willke. 2003. *Abortion: Questions & Answers*. Cincinnati: Hayes Publishing Company.

## How is an intracardiac injection abortion performed?

In an intracardiac abortion, a needle is guided into the fetus' heart with the aid of ultrasound, and poison (often potassium chloride or digoxin) is injected, causing an immediate heart attack.

Intracardiac injection is most commonly used for "pregnancy reduction" abortions following in vitro fertilization (IVF) procedures, if multiple embryos were implanted to increase the likelihood of pregnancy. In these cases, the procedure is typically performed between 10 and 12 weeks gestation.

Intracardiac injection is also used in late term abortions when there is likelihood of delivering a live baby, in order to avoid state laws that would require the baby to be resuscitated and given medical care.

Sources:

Clowes, Brian, PhD. 2001. *The Facts of Life*. Front Royal: Human Life International.

Jain, John K. and Daniel R. Mishell, Jr. 2001, February. *Misoprostol regimens for termination of second trimester pregnancy*, *Human Reproduction*, 16(2).

## How is a D&E abortion performed?

A D&E (dilation and evacuation) abortion is typically performed in the first half of the second trimester (13-20 weeks), but can be used up to approximately 28 weeks. At this stage of pregnancy, the fetus' tendons, muscles, and bones are more developed. In a D&E abortion, forceps are inserted into the uterus to forcibly dismember the fetus, and the pieces are removed one by one. Larger fetuses must also have their skulls crushed so the pieces can pass through the cervix.

Typically, the cervix must be dilated for a period of one to three days prior to a D&E abortion. This is most often done by inserting laminaria (dried seaweed sticks) into the cervix. Therefore, a D&E abortion usually requires two visits to the abortion facility.

*Source: Clowes, Brian, PhD. 2001. The Facts of Life. Front Royal: Human Life International.*



**Abortion at 21 weeks**

## How is a D&X or “partial birth” abortion performed?

A D&X (dilation and extraction) or partial-birth abortion is typically performed in the late second or third trimester. As with a D&E abortion (see above), the cervix must first be dilated, usually with laminaria (dried seaweed sticks). Forceps are then inserted into the uterus to grasp the fetus’ legs. The fetus is delivered breech while the head remains inside the birth canal. Using blunt-tipped surgical scissors, the base of the skull is pierced, and a suction catheter is inserted to extract the contents of the skull. This causes the skull to collapse, and the dead fetus is then fully delivered.

Despite the fact that the United States Supreme Court upheld the federal Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act in 2007, D&X abortions are still being performed. An abortionist can avoid violating the law by first injecting the fetus with a lethal intracardiac injection to ensure that the fetus will already be dead when it is partially delivered.

- ▶ See also “**How is an intracardiac injection abortion performed?**” on page 25.

Sources:

Goldberg, Carey. 2007. *Shots assist in aborting fetuses*. Boston Globe, August 10, Health and Fitness section.

Willke, John, MD and Barbara. 2003. *Abortion: Questions & Answers*. Cincinnati: Hayes Publishing Company.

## How is an instillation (saline) abortion performed?

In a saline abortion, amniotic fluid is removed from the uterus and replaced with a saline solu-



Saline abortion in the second trimester. Photo courtesy of Priests for Life.

tion, which the fetus swallows. The fetus is killed by salt poisoning, dehydration, brain hemorrhage and convulsions.

Saline abortions, typically performed in the second and early third trimester, are rarely used today, due to the risk of particularly serious health complications to the woman.

Source: Clowes, Brian, PhD. 2001. *The Facts of Life*. Front Royal: Human Life International.

## How is a prostaglandin abortion performed?

In a prostaglandin abortion, a dose of prostaglandin hormones is injected into the uterine muscle, which induces violent labor resulting in the death of the fetus. Prostaglandin abortions, typically performed in the second and early third trimester, are rarely used today, due to the relatively high chance that the fetus will survive the abortion and be born alive.

Source: Clowes, Brian, PhD. 2001. *The Facts of Life*. Front Royal: Human Life International.

## How is a chemical (medical) abortion performed?

In a chemical abortion, also called a medical abortion, a woman is administered an abortifacient compound called mifepristone (also called RU-486 or Mifeprex). Mifepristone blocks the action of progesterone, the natural hormone vital to maintaining the lining of the uterus. As the nutrient lining disintegrates, the embryo starves. Subsequently, the woman takes a dose of artificial prostaglandins which initiate uterine contractions and cause the embryo to be expelled from the uterus. Abortions by mifepristone are usually done prior to 49 days gestation.

*Source: Willke, John, MD and Barbara Willke. 2003. Abortion: Questions & Answers. Cincinnati: Hayes Publishing Company.*

## ANSWERING COMMON PRO-CHOICE ARGUMENTS

In talking about abortion with people who are pro-choice, you will encounter many different arguments against the pro-life side. Some of these arguments are directed to the abortion issue itself, while others focus more on the perceived hypocrisy or insensitivity of pro-lifers.

Offered here are brief responses to the most common pro-choice arguments, summing up the key points to raise in response to each. For more detailed treatment of these issues, consult the resources to be found at the end of this handbook.

### **A fetus isn't really a human being.**

“Fetus” is a Latin term meaning “little one”, used to describe a stage of development, just like “infant” or “adult”. A fetus conceived by human parents, and growing according to the instructions in its own human genetic code, is by definition human.

Human life is a continuum, beginning with the newly conceived zygote, moving through the stages of embryo and fetus on through to adult. Although a fetus doesn't look like an adult yet, neither does a newborn baby. A human fetus is no

less human simply because it is smaller and more delicate.

For that matter, neither is an embryo less human, though it looks quite strange to our eyes, even in comparison to a fetus. Still, it is our duty to recognize the common humanity of all stages of development.

► See also “**When does life begin?**” on page 11.

## Why should a woman have to give birth to an unwanted child?

While there are unwanted pregnancies, there truly are no unwanted children. Even if a pregnant woman does not want to raise the child growing in her womb, someone else does. There are many more couples seeking to adopt than children available for adoption.

► See also “**How many children have you adopted?**” on page 39.

But even if a child were “unwanted,” it would still be wrong to kill that child for not being wanted—just as it would be wrong to kill a child already born if her mother decided she no longer wanted her.

Moreover, no woman really wants to have an abortion. An unwanted abortion is no solution to an unwanted pregnancy.

## How can you tell women what they can and can't do with their bodies?

While it is certainly true that a woman's body is greatly impacted by pregnancy, it is not true that abortion is simply a matter of her choosing to do something with her body. The fetus growing within her womb is a separate person with its own distinct genetic makeup. Abortion does not remove some part of the woman's body; it destroys the body of a separate, unique individual.

- ▶ See also **"When does life begin?"** on page 11.

That said, the truth is that pro-lifers cannot "force" a woman to choose life for her baby. Abortion is legal, and even if it weren't, illegal abortion would still be an option. That is why we seek instead to inform women about the consequences of abortion and do what we can to help her choose life for her unborn child.

- ▶ See also **"Why are you opposed to abortion when it helps women so much?"** on page 50 and **"Where can a woman get help with an untimely pregnancy?"** on page 89.

## Don't a majority of Americans support legal abortion?

Despite the claims of some abortion advocates, support for abortion among the American public is rather shallow. Though many Americans will tell pollsters they support *Roe v. Wade*, few realize that *Roe* and its companion case *Doe v. Bolton* made abortion legal for almost any reason through all nine months of pregnancy.

- ▶ See also “**What did *Roe v. Wade* decide?**” and “**What did *Doe v. Bolton* decide?**” on pages 58-59.

In fact, research shows that most Americans oppose most of the abortions performed in the United States. What's more, 50% of Americans say they believe abortion is “morally wrong,” while only 38% say they believe abortion is “morally acceptable.”

Greater numbers of Americans also support restrictions on abortion like parental involvement laws and bans on partial birth abortion.

- ▶ See also “**Why do women have abortions?**” on page 22.

Sources:

Ethics and Public Policy Center. *Public Opinion on Overturning Roe v. Wade*. [http://www.eppc.org/docLib/20070514\\_RoeMemoFinal.pdf](http://www.eppc.org/docLib/20070514_RoeMemoFinal.pdf).

Gallup. *Americans Favor Parental Involvement in Teen Abortion Decisions*. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/20203/Americans-Favor-Parental-Involvement-Teen-Abortion-Decisions.aspx>.

Gallup. *Abortion*. 2008, April 23. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1576/Abortion.aspx>.

## Shouldn't abortion be legal in cases of rape or incest?

There are two answers to this objection. First, a child conceived through rape or incest does not deserve the death penalty for his or her father's crime. Second, research shows that the victim of either crime is likely to suffer more if she resorts to abortion.

One large-scale study of pregnant rape victims found that approximately 70 percent chose to give birth. Many sexual assault victims see giving birth as a selfless, loving act that helps bring healing from the horrific experience of the rape itself.

Women who abort children conceived through rape often report that they didn't feel that they had any other choice, since everyone around them assumed that they would not want to give birth to the rapist's baby.

The case against abortion for pregnant victims of incest is even stronger. Incest victims hardly ever voluntarily consent to an abortion. Rather than viewing the pregnancy as unwanted, the victim of incest is more likely to see the pregnancy as a way to get out of the incestuous relationship because it exposes the abusive sexual activity that family members are either unaware of or unwilling to acknowledge. The pregnancy poses a threat to the perpetrator, who frequently attempts to coerce his incest victim to have an unwanted abortion.

The idea that the violent act of abortion is beneficial to victims of rape and incest is simply unfounded. On the contrary, evidence shows that abortion in such cases compounds the unspeakable pain that victims experience.

Moreover, given that one-third of one percent of abortions are performed under such circumstances, we might ask why this question is so frequently raised. Do these extremely rare cases justify tolerating the other 99.67% of abortions? Would those who raise this objection really be willing to ban abortion if exceptions were made for rape and incest?

Sources:

Johnston, Wm. Robert. *Reasons Given For Having Abortions In The United States*. <http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/policy/abortion/abreasons.html>

Mahkorn, "Pregnancy and Sexual Assault," *The Psychological Aspects of Abortion*, eds. Mall and Watts (Washington, D.C., University Publications of America, 1979) 55-69.

Maloof, "The Consequences of Incest: Giving and Taking Life" *The Psychological Aspects of Abortion*, eds. Mall and Watts (Washington, D.C., University Publications of America, 1979) 84-85.

Reardon, David, PhD, Julie Makimaa, and Amy Sobie. 2000. *Victims and Victors: Speaking Out About Their Pregnancies, Abortions, and Children Resulting from Sexual Assault*. Battle Creek. Acorn Publishing.

## Abortion opponents are violent—they shoot abortionists and attack women!

Despite some highly publicized cases, violence perpetrated by abortion opponents is extremely rare. All major pro-life organizations have official policies condemning the use of violence, and no cases of violence directed at abortion-bound women by pro-life activists have ever been substantiated, despite the rhetoric from some abortion advocates.

The few individuals who have committed acts of violence were not part of the mainstream pro-life movement, and in some cases have even admitted they were more motivated by a desire for fame than concern for the plight of unborn children.

In fact, there have been more reported acts of violence perpetrated against pro-lifers than committed by them. Just as it would be unfair to characterize all pro-choice people as violent because of a few criminals, it is unfair to say that pro-lifers are violent because of a few fringe figures.

On the contrary, pro-life activism demands patience and peace, which is why the pro-life movement is the most peaceful protest movement in U.S. history.

Sources:

Clowes, Brian. 2008, June 30. *Abortion Violence*. <http://abortionviolence.com>.

Ertelt, Steven. 2003, September 3. *Paul Hill's Violence Won't be Missed by the Pro-Life Movement*. *LifeNews.com*. <http://www.lifenews.com/nat97.html>.

Christian Broadcasting Network. 2009, June 1. *Pro-Life Leaders Respond to Tiller Shooting*. <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/us/2009/May/Pro-Life-Community-Condems-Tiller-Shooting>.

Pavone, Rev. Frank. 2009, June 1. *Statement about the Killing of George Tiller*. <http://www.priestsforlife.org/news/09-06-01-tiller-statement.htm>.

Pro-Life Action League. 2009, June 1. *League Condemns Murder of Abortionist George Tiller*. <http://prolifeaction.org/home/2009/tiller.htm>.

## What if there's something “wrong” with the baby?

It would be wrong to say that the life of a child with a disability is of less value than the life of any other child. A disability can even become a source of tremendous personal growth and meaning. The parents of disabled children often report that their lives are blessed by the experience of caring for a disabled child, and those children grow up to value their own lives.

Moreover, women often face severe physical and emotional trauma after an abortion. This trauma is not lessened simply because she knows the baby would have been disabled.

- ▶ See also “**Why are you opposed to abortion when it helps women so much?**” on pages 50-51 and “**Where can a woman get help dealing with a poor prenatal diagnosis?**” on page 93.

## Men can't get pregnant, so they shouldn't tell women what to do.

The pro-life movement is often characterized as an effort by men to control women's bodies. But in fact, some studies have shown women to be more pro-life than men. Perhaps they recognize that abortion often serves the selfish interests of men rather than the real needs of women.

The experience of pro-life counselors and the testimony of women who have spoken out about their abortions show that men are more likely to push women into abortions they do not want than to try to force them not to have an abortion. But we never hear abortion advocates speaking out against this kind of influence of men over women.

The pro-life movement calls on men to take responsibility for the children they have helped to conceive. The men who are active in the pro-life movement are responding to the call to step up and be advocates for women and children.

Finally, no one would try to impose this principle—that only those directly affected by an issue should have any say about it—to any other social justice movement. It was not only slaves, former slaves and former slave owners who spoke out for emancipation. It was not only black Americans who fought for civil rights. Nor should it be only women, today, who speak out against abortion.

*Source: Gallup, George. 2004. The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 2003. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.*

## Why do you think the fetus is more important than the woman?

Neither life—that of an unborn child or that of her mother—is more important than the other's. On the contrary, both lives are of equal value, and both deserve to be protected by the laws of our society.

## How many children have you adopted?

### There are too many unwanted children now!

There are many more couples seeking to adopt babies than there are babies available for adoption. Each year approximately 40,000 babies are given up for adoption in the United States and 115,000 children in foster care are eligible for adoption, versus approximately 600,000 couples actively seeking to adopt children.

Sources:

U.S. Department of Health And Human Services CDC. 2008. *Adoption Experiences of Women and Men and Demand for Children to Adopt by Women 18–44 Years of Age in the United States, 2002*. Vital And Health Statistics 23. No. 27. [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr\\_23/sr23\\_027.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_23/sr23_027.pdf)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. 2010, July 29. *Trends in Foster Care and Adoption—FY 2002-FY 2009*. [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats\\_research/afcars/trends.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/afcars/trends.htm).

## Do you want to return to the days of “back alley” and “coat hanger” abortions?

The idea of widespread and dangerous “back alley” abortions prior to the nationwide legalization of abortion in 1973 is not supported by the facts. The medical director of Planned Parenthood wrote in 1960 that “90% of illegal abortions are presently being done by physicians.”

Likewise, the “coat hanger abortion” is a myth. In his 1979 book, *Aborting America*, Dr. Bernard Nathanson, co-founder of the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws (NARAL) refers to one coat hanger abortion. However, Nathanson, who is now committedly pro-life, has publicly confessed to fabricating evidence in order to get abortion legalized. There is no hard evidence to support the performance of a single coat hanger abortion.

NARAL claimed that 1,000,000 illegal abortions were performed yearly, though they believed the actual number to be about 100,000. They claimed that 10,000 women died each year from illegal abortions, knowing that the actual number was a mere fraction of this.

- ▶ See also “**If you make abortion illegal, women will die**” on page 43.

Sources:

Calderone, Mary S., MD. 1960. *Illegal Abortion as a Public Health Problem*. American Journal of Public Health 50, no. 7 (July). p. 949.

Nathanson, Bernard. *Confessions of an Ex-Abortioneer*. <http://www.aboutabortions.com/Confess.html>.

Nathanson, Bernard. 2002. *National Abortion Rights Action League Founder Reminisces*. <http://www.pregnantpause.org/abort/remember-naral.htm>.

Willke, John, MD and Barbara Willke. 2003. *Abortion: Questions & Answers*. Cincinnati: Hayes Publishing Company.

## Why are you opposed to abortion if it's legal?

Just because something is legal doesn't mean it's right. At one time, slavery was legal in the United States. Slavery did not become wrong when it was abolished after the Civil War—slavery was always wrong. The injustice of slavery ended in large measure thanks to people like William Lloyd Garrison, Fredrick Douglass and Harriet Tubman, who spoke out against the unjust laws that kept millions of American blacks enslaved.

Likewise, the pro-life movement is speaking out against the unjust—but legal—killing of unborn human beings.

## Can't you be personally opposed to abortion, but still think it should be legal?

Many people who are personally opposed to abortion—who consider abortion to be the unjust killing of a human being—still believe that abortion should be legal. They say that it's impossible to stop abortion, so we need to keep abortion legal to reduce the risks associated with abortion. However, history does not support this analysis.

Between 1972 (the year before *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion throughout the United States) and 1979, the nation's abortion rate skyrocketed. But when Poland made abortion illegal in 1993, its abortion rate plummeted.

The law is a powerful teacher, influencing people's attitudes towards right and wrong. We cannot assume that if abortion were made illegal, the abortion rate would remain steady, with similar numbers of women seeking illegal abortions. The evidence above suggests the contrary.

Those who wish to make abortion rare must seek to make it illegal. That would not end all abortions, but it would dramatically reduce the nation's abortion rate.

Source: Willke, John, MD and Barbara Willke. 2003. *Abortion: Questions & Answers*. Cincinnati: Hayes Publishing Company.

## If you make abortion illegal, women will die.

It is impossible to know how many illegal abortions were performed prior to 1973, since they were not reported. Still, we have a fairly accurate picture of how many women died from illegal abortions. A woman who was seriously injured as a result of abortion would go to another physician for care; if she died, that physician would accurately report her cause of death as abortion.

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, after penicillin became available the number of deaths from abortion stabilized in the 1950s to about 250 per year. By 1966, when abortion was still illegal in all 50 states, abortion deaths had dropped to half that number. In 1972, the year before the Supreme Court legalized abortion nationwide, only 39 women died—fewer than one per state.

Unfortunately, women are still dying from abortion. Life Dynamics has documented the deaths of 347 women from so-called “safe, legal abortion.”

- ▶ See also “Do you want to return to the days of ‘back alley’ and ‘coat hanger’ abortions?” on page 40 and “Isn’t abortion safer than childbirth?” on page 54.

### Sources:

Calderone, Mary S., MD. 1960. *Illegal Abortion as a Public Health Problem*. *American Journal of Public Health* 50, no. 7 (July). p. 949.

Life Dynamics Inc. *The Blackmun Wall*. [http://www.lifedynamics.net/Pro-life\\_Group/Pro-choice\\_Women/](http://www.lifedynamics.net/Pro-life_Group/Pro-choice_Women/).

Willke, John, MD and Barbara Willke. 2003. *Abortion: Questions & Answers*. Cincinnati: Hayes Publishing Company.

## Why don't you care about babies once they're born?

The pro-life movement cares very much about babies, both before and after they're born. That is why we have established a nationwide support system of pregnancy resource centers (PRCs) devoted to providing emotional and material support for women facing both untimely pregnancy and the demands of being a new parent.

- ▶ For information on contacting PRCs or donating money or baby items, see "**Where can a woman get help with an untimely pregnancy?**" on page 89.

Research shows abortion has increased rates of child abuse and other violent acts. Thus, decreasing the number of abortions means that fewer children will be abused.

Sources:

*Abortion Recovery Counseling. 2005. New Study Links Abortion To Increased Risk of Child Abuse. <http://www.abortionrecoverycounseling.com/Page7.html>.*

*Coleman, Priscilla K., PhD, Charles D. Maxey, Vincent M. Rue, PhD, and Catherine T. Coyle, RN, PhD. 2005. Associations Between Voluntary And Involuntary Forms of Perinatal Loss And Child Maltreatment Among Low-Income Mothers. Acta Paediatrica 94: 10.*

## Why don't you stop trying to impose your religion on others?

A person does not have to believe in God to be pro-life. Science shows us that the unborn child is a genetically unique and separate person from his or her mother, even though dependent on the mother for survival. Research has also shown us that abortion hurts women (and men as well) and puts women at greater risk for a number of diseases.

- ▶ See also **“Why are you opposed to abortion when it helps women so much?”** on pages 50-51.

For these reasons independent from religion, many non-religious individuals have been persuaded to join the pro-life movement.

Though the injustice of abortion can be clearly established without depending on religious arguments, religious faith plays an important role in inspiring people to take an active part in confronting that injustice. In other words, pro-lifers who are religious do not oppose abortion simply because their religion tells them to; rather, recognizing that abortion is wrong, their faith compels them to do something to right that wrong.

## Why don't you hand out contraceptives if you really want to reduce abortion?

On its face, it seems reasonable that if it is possible to reduce the number of unintended pregnancies by means of contraception, then it is also possible to reduce the number of abortions. But in practice this strategy does not work, due to several factors.

First, while contraceptives do reduce the chances that pregnancy will result from an individual sexual act, the widespread use of contraceptives increases risky sexual behavior overall. This is demonstrated by the dramatic increase in the number of sexually transmitted diseases and illegitimate births over the past four decades, even as contraception has become more and more widely available.

Next, we must realize that contraceptives often fail. Over half of the women who seek abortions each year report that they were using a contraceptive at the time they became pregnant. Of the nearly 12 million women on the birth control pill, eight to nine percent become pregnant each year, which means nearly a million pregnancies occur annually from Pill failure alone.

Another critical factor in why contraception is no solution for the problem of abortion is that the long-term use of contraceptives may predispose women to seek abortion when those contracep-

tives fail. Contraception severely weakens the link between a couple's sexual activity and any responsibility to make a lifelong commitment or raise a family together. Pregnancy is no longer seen as a natural consequence of sex, but a negative side effect.

Moreover, the practice of repeatedly taking action—through the use of contraceptives—against the possibility of pregnancy may make it easier to take action—through abortion—to end a pregnancy when it occurs.

Those who continue to insist that contraception is the answer should explain why sexually transmitted diseases, illegitimate births, and abortion are endemic in American society today, despite the fact that contraceptives are available at any drug store, widely promoted in our schools, and heavily advertised in the media.

Promoting ever greater use of contraceptives will not work to reduce the number of abortions. Rather, we must work to change societal attitudes towards sex and reconnect sex with its proper context of marriage and family.

Sources:

*Australian Broadcasting Corporation. 2003, April 30. Contraception less reliable than you might think. <http://www.abc.net.au/science/news/stories/s843232.htm>.*

*Guttmacher Institute. 2011, January. Facts on Induced Abortion in the United States. [http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/jb\\_induced\\_abortion.html](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/jb_induced_abortion.html).*

## Why do you want to throw women in jail if they have abortions?

The pro-life movement does not want to put women in jail for having abortions. Pro-lifers consider women to be victimized by abortion, whether it is legal or illegal. Laws against abortion would impose penalties on the abortionist, not the woman.

According to the pro-choice writer Rachel Benson Gold, when abortion was still illegal, “women were rarely convicted for having an abortion; instead, the threat of prosecution often was used to encourage them to testify against the provider.” Likewise, in states with laws restricting abortion today, penalties are imposed on the abortion practitioner, not the woman.

In fact, it was early feminists like Susan B. Anthony who fought to criminalize abortion in the 19th century. They recognized that abortion exploited and harmed women, so they called for new laws that would prevent doctors and other practitioners from performing abortions. If the law of the land on abortion were to change in the future, it would again be the abortion practitioners who would face penalties—not the women on whom they performed abortions.

Sources:

Benson Gold, Rachel. 2003, March. *Lessons from Before Roe: Will Past be Prologue? The Guttmacher Report on Public Policy 6, No 1.* <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/tgr/06/1/gr060108.html#box>.

*Priests For Life. The Founders of Women's Movement All Opposed Abortion.* <http://www.priestsforlife.org/articles/femquotes.html>.

## Don't we need abortion to prevent overpopulation?

Overpopulation is not a problem in the United States. On the contrary, the U.S. fertility rate is 2.06 children per couple, slightly below “replacement” level—the number of births needed to keep population stable. If not for immigration, the U.S. population would be stagnant.

Most European and Asian nations are well below the replacement rate. These nations will soon face a shortage of people of working age, with too few workers to support the elderly in their retirement. Even in developing nations, fertility rates have begun to steadily decline.

There is more than enough space on earth for the world's population. In fact, every person in the world could comfortably live within the landmass of the state of Texas. The real problem is resource consumption, as developed nations consume resources at an alarming rate. While one solution to this problem might be to limit the number of people allowed to live on earth, a better solution would be to responsibly limit our consumption of the earth's resources.

Sources:

CIA World Factbook. 2010. Rank Order-Total Fertility Rate. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2127rank.html>.

Mosher, Steven. Did you know? [http://lifeissues.net/writers/mos/pri\\_01texas.html](http://lifeissues.net/writers/mos/pri_01texas.html).

Population Research Institute. FAQ's. <http://pop.org/main.cfm?EID=802>.

United Nations Population Division. 2005, February 25. Press Release Pop/918. <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2005/pop918.doc.htm>.

## Why are you opposed to abortion when it helps women so much?

Although abortion advocates claim that abortion is necessary for women's well-being, in fact abortion seriously harms the women who choose it. Women deserve better than abortion.

Abortion increases a woman's risk of developing breast, cervical, ovarian, and liver cancers. Subsequent pregnancies are more likely to involve complications including placenta previa, premature labor, or ectopic pregnancy. Moreover, abortion is the fifth leading cause of maternal death in the United States, despite significant levels of under-reporting.

Women are also psychologically harmed by abortion. Post-abortive women have higher rates of drug and alcohol abuse. They have higher rates of suicidal thoughts and attempt suicide more often. They are more likely to abuse their current children and to get divorced. Post-abortive women are more likely than the general population to seek counseling or hospitalization for depression.

Thousands of women who have experienced the negative impact of abortion in their lives have begun to speak out through programs like the Silent No More Awareness Campaign. They are sharing their stories of how abortion has harmed them on websites like [SilentNoMore.com](http://SilentNoMore.com) and at [AfterAbortion.org](http://AfterAbortion.org).

- ▶ See also “**Where can I get help dealing with the pain of abortion?**” on page 91.

Sources:

Deveber Institute. *Summary Of Women's Health After Abortion*. <http://www.deveber.org/drupal/summary-womens-health-after-abortion>.

Elliot Institute. *A List of Major Physical Sequelae Related To Abortion*. <http://www.afterabortion.org/physica.html>.

Ring-Cassidy, Elizabeth and Ian Gentles. 2003. *Maternal Mortality*. In *Women's Health After Abortion: The Medical And Psychological Evidence*. Deveber Institute: Toronto. <http://www.deveber.org/text/chapters/Chap6.pdf>.



**Pro-Choice  
Arguments**

## Aren't there worse evils than abortion—like war, crime and hunger?

There are many evils in this world, and all who dedicate their lives to fighting these evils are to be applauded. Those who are dedicated to fighting abortion believe that abortion is a serious enough evil to deserve a full-scale effort like the pro-life movement.

It might be helpful to compare the scope of abortion with the scope of other evils. In 2008, the most recent year for which data is available, there were 1.21 million abortions performed in the United States, or 3,322 abortions per day.

Since the founding of the United States in 1776, 1.6 million Americans soldiers have been killed in battle. Since the legalization of abortion in 1973, over 50 million unborn Americans have been aborted—more than 30 times the number of war deaths. As of February 2011, approximately 5,900 Americans had died fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan since hostilities began at the start of the decade—which is 0.05% of the number of abortions during the same period. And on September 11, 2001, more lives were taken by abortion than in the terrorist attacks of that day.

In 2008, 16,300 people were murdered and 89,000 rapes were reported to the FBI—so abortion is 74 times more common than murder and 13 times more common than rape.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, members of some 6.8 million households will go hungry at some point during the year. While hunger is a tremendous social problem, especially in a country as wealthy as the United States, it cannot compare to the injustice of being killed; few Americans die of starvation, but millions are aborted.

Such problems as these deserve to be addressed by concerned Americans. If we would not chastise those who advocate against war, crime and hunger for focusing on the specific problems they feel called to address, why would we chastise those in the pro-life movement for focusing on ending abortion?

Sources:

Centers for Disease Control. 2006. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss5511a1.htm>.

FBI. 2009. *Violent Crime*. [http://www2.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2009/offenses/violent\\_crime/index.html](http://www2.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2009/offenses/violent_crime/index.html)

Free Republic. *Numbers of Americans Killed/Wounded By Action*. [www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/2030369/posts](http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/2030369/posts).

Guttmacher Institute. 2011, January. *Facts on Induced Abortion in the United States*. [http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb\\_induced\\_abortion.html](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html).

ICasualties.org. *Iraq Casualty Coalition Count*. 2009, January. <http://icasualties.org/oif/>

Times Online. 2008, September 11. *New York Silent For 9/11 Memorial*. [http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us\\_and\\_americas/article4734589.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/article4734589.ece).

United States Department of Agriculture. 2010. *Food Security in the United States*. [http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodSecurity/stats\\_graphs.htm](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodSecurity/stats_graphs.htm).

## Isn't abortion safer than childbirth?

Abortion advocates often claim that abortion is much safer than childbirth. However, this claim does not stand up to a close examination of the evidence.

The official medical term that this claim is based on, “maternal mortality,” includes deaths from abortion, so the claim that abortion deaths are much lower than “maternal mortality” really says nothing. Moreover, “maternal mortality” includes deaths from hemorrhages, blood clots, ectopic pregnancies, infections, complications from high blood pressure or diabetes and more—not just from childbirth itself.

No accurate accounting of abortion deaths exists. Some studies show that 4% of all maternal mortality is due to abortion while others show 8%. Anecdotal evidence reveals substantial underreporting. For example, Dr. John C. Willke writes that a pro-life physician friend did not report a girl's cause of death as abortion because “that family has suffered enough and I'm not going to add to their woes by revealing that she had an abortion.”

Because the records of live births and stillbirths are public, it is easy to correlate deaths related to childbirth. Any woman who dies within one year of giving birth is automatically considered a maternal death for record-keeping purposes. But records from abortions are private. This means that unless

a woman's family reports that she had an abortion or somehow a coroner determines that she had an abortion, her death will not be included in the statistics for maternal mortality or abortion death.

Sources:

Department of Health and Human Services: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2007, February. *Maternal Mortality and Related Concepts*. Vital Health and Statistics 3, No 33. [www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr\\_03/sr03\\_033.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_03/sr03_033.pdf).

Elliot Institute. *A List Of Major Physical Sequelae Related To Abortion*. [http://www.abortionfacts.com/reardon/effect\\_of\\_abortion.asp](http://www.abortionfacts.com/reardon/effect_of_abortion.asp).

Khan, Khalid S., PhD, Daniel Wojdyla, Lale Say, MD, A. Metin Gülmezoglu, MD, Paul F. A. Van Look, MD. 2006. *WHO Analysis of Causes of Maternal Death: A Systematic Review*. *The Lancet*. 367: 1066-1074.

Willke, J.C., MD. *Abortion v. Child Birth: Which Is Safer?* Life Issues Institute. [http://www.lifeissues.org/connector/2006/Apr06\\_Abortion-Childbirth.htm](http://www.lifeissues.org/connector/2006/Apr06_Abortion-Childbirth.htm).

## If you're really pro-life, why don't you oppose the death penalty?

Many pro-lifers question whether a society that allows the legal killing of more than a million unborn children each year can retain the moral authority to impose the penalty of death. However, the death penalty cannot be considered morally equivalent to abortion.

Abortion is a far more serious threat to human life than the death penalty. For every execution performed in the United States, there are more than 32,000 abortions. Moreover, the basic principles behind these two forms of legalized killing are fundamentally different.

Behind legal abortion is the principle that the life of the unborn child does not have intrinsic value, and therefore the state may withdraw protection from that life. Behind the death penalty is the principle that the life of the convicted criminal has so much value that to take that life constitutes the ultimate penalty society can impose.

Therefore, there is no inherent contradiction between opposing abortion and supporting the death penalty in principle. But there is a clear contradiction between opposing the execution of human beings guilty of heinous crimes and supporting the abortion of innocent unborn human beings.

Sources:

Amnesty International. 2009. *The Death Penalty in the Americas in 2008*. <http://www.amnesty.org/en/death-penalty/death-sentences-and-executions-in-2008/americas>.

Guttmacher Institute. 2011, January. *Facts on Induced Abortion in the United States*. [http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb\\_induced\\_abortion.html](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html).

## QUESTIONS OF LAW

There are many important legal issues surrounding abortion, and a great deal of misinformation among the public about such issues as what kinds of abortions are allowed by law and what pro-lifers can do to peacefully oppose abortion.

The questions and answers below deal not only with court decisions and laws that outline the conditions under which abortions are performed, but also with the legality of various forms of pro-life activism, and what pro-life activists can do when their rights are restricted by other citizens or the police.



## How did abortion become legal in the United States?

On January 22, 1973 the United States Supreme Court rulings *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* struck down as unconstitutional all existing laws restricting abortion. See below for details on these two cases.

### What did *Roe v. Wade* decide?

In the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled 7-2 that the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which protects the rights to life, liberty and property, entailed a “right to privacy” that included the right for a woman to procure an abortion up until “the point at which the fetus becomes ‘viable.’”

*Roe v. Wade* effectively overturned all existing state laws against abortion. *Roe v. Wade* did allow for some limitations on when abortions could be obtained. However, these limitations were effectively nullified by the court’s decision in *Roe’s* companion case, *Doe v. Bolton*, outlined below.

- ▶ See also “**Who was Jane Roe, and where is she now?**” on page 62.

Source: *Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. 113 (1973).

## What did *Doe v. Bolton* decide?

*Doe v. Bolton* challenged a Georgia law which required the approval of multiple physicians, under limited circumstances, for an abortion to take place. The ruling overturned limits on obtaining abortions such as restrictions on what point during a pregnancy an abortion can be obtained, whether one can cross state lines to obtain an abortion and whether a doctor has to approve an abortion.

In *Doe v. Bolton*, the court ruled that abortion for “the health of the mother” could not be restricted, while adopting a very broad definition of what “may relate to health”, including “all factors—physical, emotional, psychological, familial, and the woman’s age—relevant to the wellbeing of the patient”. This effectively made abortion legal through all nine months of pregnancy for almost any reason.

- ▶ See also “**Who was Mary Doe, and where is she now?**” on page 63.

Source: *Doe v. Bolton*, 410 U.S. 179 (1973).

## What was the legal status of abortion in the United States before *Roe v. Wade*?

Dating back to British common law, the historical foundation of American law, abortion was illegal after “quickening”, when the mother could feel the baby begin to move. As early as 1871 the American Medical Association condemned abortion as “wholesale destruction of unborn infants.” By 1900, abortion was illegal throughout the United States through all nine months of pregnancy.

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, individual states regulated abortion, with penalties typically imposed on the abortionists. In the 1960’s, in the midst of the sexual revolution and more widespread use of contraception, some sociologists and legal scholars proposed that abortion laws be liberalized to allow exceptions for rape, incest and other reasons never before considered to justify abortion.

Colorado legalized abortion for rape, incest, significant fetal anomaly or threat to the mother’s health in 1967. In 1970, New York passed the country’s most permissive abortion law, allowing abortion up to 24 weeks for any reason. By the time of *Roe v. Wade*, thirteen states had passed laws similar to Colorado’s. Most states allowed abortion only in cases where a woman’s life was said to be in danger.

All of these state laws on abortion were rendered moot by the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* decisions in 1973.

- ▶ See also “**What did Roe v. Wade decide?**” on page 58.
- ▶ See also “**What did Doe v. Bolton decide?**” on page 59.
- ▶ See also “**Is abortion ever necessary to save a woman's life?**” on page 23.

Sources:

Dorland. 1965. *Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary 1689*. St. Louis, MO: W.B. Saunders Co.

Lewis, J. and Shimabukuro, Jon O. *Abortion Law Development: A Brief Overview*. [http://www.policyalmanac.org/culture/archive/crs-abortion\\_overview.shtml](http://www.policyalmanac.org/culture/archive/crs-abortion_overview.shtml).

Quay, Eugene. 1961. *Justifiable Abortion: Medical and Legal Foundations*. Family Life Bureau, National Catholic Welfare Conference.



## Who was Jane Roe, and where is she now?

The real name of the woman anonymously named “Jane Roe” in *Roe v. Wade* is Norma McCorvey. In her lawsuit, she claimed to have become pregnant as the result of rape and argued that she should therefore be allowed to have an abortion, despite the laws against abortion in her home state of Texas. She gave birth to the child and placed her for adoption before the 1973 ruling legalized abortion. McCorvey worked in the pro-choice movement and for an abortion clinic for several years thereafter.

After publicly identifying herself as Jane Roe, McCorvey became friends with Rev. Flip Benham and other pro-lifers. Her book, *Won By Love*, recounts how the compassion pro-lifers showed to her brought her into the pro-life movement. McCorvey has admitted to the many fabrications in the *Roe v. Wade* case, including her claim to have been raped, and is now an outspoken pro-life advocate. In 2005 she asked the United States Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade* on the basis of new evidence showing that abortion hurts women.

► See also “**What did *Roe v. Wade* decide?**” on page 58.

Sources:

McCorvey, Norma. 1998. *Won By Love*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc.

## Who was Mary Doe, and where is she now?

The “Mary Doe” in *Doe v. Bolton* was Sandra Cano. Cano had gone to a free legal clinic seeking help getting a divorce and retrieving her children from foster care. She happened to be pregnant at the time. Without her realizing what they were doing, her lawyers sidelined the issues she wanted help with and instead filed a lawsuit stating that she wanted an abortion. When Cano’s mother and lawyer arranged for her to have an abortion, she fled the state.

Unfortunately Cano did not understand the legal jargon being used in her case. She had no idea that her lawyers were fighting for abortion rights, not for her divorce. Cano has always been and continues to be opposed to abortion. Cano even filed a motion for the Supreme Court to rehear and overturn her case, but in 2006 the Court refused. Her story is chronicled in the book *Supreme Deception*.

► See also “**What did Doe v. Bolton decide?**” on page 59.

Source: Fletcher Lash, Sybil. 2002. *Supreme Deception: How an Activist Attorney Manipulated the U.S. Supreme Court and Gave Birth To Partial Birth Abortions*. Lawrenceville: Sentinel Productions.

## What would happen if *Roe v. Wade* were overturned?

If the Supreme Court were to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, it would not mean the end of legal abortion in the United States. Rather, the issue would return to the states, where it was before *Roe v. Wade*. State legislatures would then have the power to determine the legal status of abortion in their individual states.

Several states have already enacted laws intended to go into effect if *Roe v. Wade* were overturned. Some of these laws would ban most abortions, while others would maintain the status quo of broadly legal abortion under *Roe*.

- ▶ See also “How did abortion become legal in the United States?” on page 58 and “What was the legal status of abortion in the United States before *Roe v. Wade*?” on page 60.

## Are states permitted to place restrictions on abortion?

Since the Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* rulings in 1973 (see above), most states have sought to impose restrictions on abortion. As these laws have been enacted, Planned Parenthood, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and other abortion advocacy organizations have sought court injunctions to prevent them from going into effect. Many of these legal battles have found their way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In *Planned Parenthood v. Danforth* (1976), the Court upheld the right of a state to require the consent of one parent when a minor sought an abortion. A judicial bypass provision was required in cases where a minor felt she would be in danger if she sought consent from a parent.

In *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services* (1989), the Court upheld a state's prerogative to prohibit the use of taxpayer funds and public facilities for abortions.

In *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey* (1992) the Court discarded the trimester formula adopted in *Roe*, and ruled that states could enact laws to protect the unborn child after viability. *Casey* also upheld the state's 24-hour waiting period before an abortion, as well as the state's parental consent and informed consent laws.

► See also "**What legal restrictions on abortion have states enacted?**" on pages 66-67.

In *Gonzales v. Carhart* (2007) the Supreme Court upheld the federal ban on a particular type of late term abortion known as partial birth abortion.

► See also "**How is a D&X or 'partial birth' abortion performed?**" on page 27.

Sources:

*Planned Parenthood v. Danforth*, 428 U.S. 52 (1976).

*Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, 492 U.S. 490 (1989).

*Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, 505 U.S. 833 (1992).

*Gonzales v. Carhart*, 550 U.S. 124 (2007).

## What legal restrictions on abortion have states enacted?

Several measures have been enacted in various states to restrict abortion:

**Parental Notification:** Parental notification statutes require written proof that one or both parents have been notified of their daughter's desire to have an abortion. Parental notification is required in 16 states.

**Parental Consent:** Parental consent statutes require written proof that, not only have one or both parents been notified, but also that one or both parents consent to their daughter's decision. Twenty-four states have parental consent laws.

**Waiting Periods:** Waiting periods ranging from one to 24 hours before an abortion can be performed have been enacted in 24 states.

**Informed Consent:** While it is ethically and legally required for a doctor to explain a medical procedure before performing it on a patient, this is not universally required for abortion. Eighteen states have laws requiring a woman to be provided with some kind of information before an abortion is performed, ranging from offering a woman an ultrasound and thoroughly explaining the procedure to merely making pamphlets that explain the procedure available. (These laws are sometimes referred to as "Right to Know" laws.)

**Partial Birth Abortion Bans:** In addition to a federal law banning partial birth abortion, 16 states have laws prohibiting the practice that would remain in force if the federal law were ever repealed.

The numbers of states listed above refer to states where abortion restrictions are in force. Many other state restrictions on abortion have been permanently enjoined by the courts and are not in force. It is also important to note that while those state restrictions that are in force provide some degree of protection to the unborn and their mothers, abortion remains relatively easy to obtain throughout the United States.

- ▶ For detailed information on state restrictions, both in force and enjoined, review the Guttmacher Institute's *State Policies in Brief: An Overview of Abortion Laws* (see below), which is updated monthly.

Source: Guttmacher Institute. 2011, February 1. *State Policies in Brief: An Overview of Abortion Laws*. [http://www.guttmacher.org/statecenter/spibs/spib\\_OAL.pdf](http://www.guttmacher.org/statecenter/spibs/spib_OAL.pdf).

## Do any state restrictions actually reduce abortion?

In a 2008 analysis conducted for the Family Research Council, University of Alabama Professor Michael New found that parental involvement laws have lowered abortion rates as much as 13% among minors in the states where they have been enacted. The most dramatic results were seen in laws requiring parental consent, rather than just notification, and laws requiring involvement from both parents, rather than just one.

Since these laws can be circumvented if a girl can travel to a nearby state without a parental involvement law, such laws are more effective when neighboring states have similar laws in force.

*Source: New, Michael, PhD. 2008, September 24. The Effect of Parental Involvement Laws on the Incidence of Abortion Among Minors. Family Research Council. <http://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF08I28.pdf>.*

## What is the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act?

The Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act was signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1994. FACE specifically prohibits “the use of force or threat of force or physical obstruction” to intentionally injure, intimidate, or interfere with someone seeking to enter a facility that provides abortions. FACE also prohibits the same actions at places of religious worship, considered by some legal analysts as a bid by the law’s drafters not to appear to be singling out pro-life activity.

The penalty for a first violation of FACE is 6-12 months in prison, and a fine of \$10,000 to \$100,000. Subsequent convictions carry a punishment of 18-36 months in prison and a fine of \$25,000 to \$250,000. These penalties are far more severe than the penalties already imposed by state law for the acts prohibited by FACE.

*Source: United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division. <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/split/facestat.php>.*

## **Is it legal for pro-lifers to pray outside an abortion facility?**

Pro-lifers have the same rights as all American citizens under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution to freedom of expression on the public way. This includes the right to pray on a public sidewalk. However, one is not permitted to block the sidewalk in the process of exercising this right.

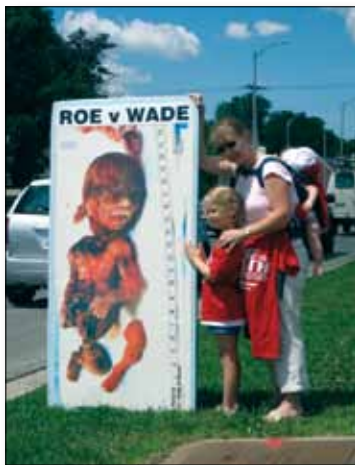
## **Is it legal to talk to abortion-bound women outside abortion facilities?**

As long as one remains on public property and does not block the public right-of-way, it is perfectly legal to talk to a woman going into an abortion facility, to her companion, or to anyone else. It is not permissible to go onto private property in order to communicate, unless specifically invited there by someone with the authority to make the invitation.

The right to free speech is guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, and does not depend on the hearer's permission or interest in hearing the speech.

## Is it legal to display graphic abortion pictures in public?

The public display of graphic images of abortion is a form of freedom of expression guaranteed by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. The fact that a message may be unwelcome to some viewers or listeners does not abrogate the right to proclaim the message.



## When should pro-life activists call the police?

If pro-lifers ever feel threatened or in danger due to the actions of any person, they should call the police, for two critical reasons. First, the pro-life activists should not hesitate to protect their own safety. Second, individuals who use force or threaten to use force may be guilty of assault or battery, and if they are not confronted by the police this time, they may feel emboldened to threaten or harm other pro-lifers in the future.

“Assault” is defined as placing a person in reasonable apprehension of being struck or pushed, through words or gestures. “Battery” is the willful or intentional touching of a person against that person’s will by another person, or by an object or substance put in motion by another person. An offensive touching can constitute a battery even if it does not cause injury, and could not reasonably be expected to cause injury.

It is also appropriate to call the police if it is readily apparent that a woman or girl is being coerced to go into the abortion clinic by someone accompanying her.

*Larson, Aaron, Esq. 2003. Assault and Battery. Expert Law. [http://www.expertlaw.com/library/personal\\_injury/assault\\_battery.htm](http://www.expertlaw.com/library/personal_injury/assault_battery.htm).*

## May police put a stop to pro-life activity simply because someone complains?

Peaceful, legal exercise of the freedom of speech is not dependent on the attitude or response of those who see or hear the message. Police may receive complaints from the public during a pro-life demonstration, but it is the duty of the police to protect the pro-lifers' First Amendment rights and to explain these rights to those who are complaining.

There are, however, situations in which the police may be appropriately exercising their duty to protect the safety of the public by restricting to some extent the location of a demonstration or the way in which it is organized. When such "time, place and manner" restrictions are imposed, it must be clear that law enforcement's duty to ensure public safety overrides the First Amendment rights of the demonstrators. Since this is a judgement call on the part of a police officer, it will necessarily be subjective.

► See also "**Pro-Life Legal Issues**" on page 95.

Source: Brejcha, Thomas, Esq., and Terry Hodges. *Law and Order. Pro-Life Action League. Compact disc.*

## If police attempt to restrict peaceful pro-life activities, should the activists comply?

It is advisable to comply with police directives, even when one is certain those directives violate pro-lifers' freedom of expression guaranteed by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. Such violations can be more effectively challenged afterwards in court. Receiving a citation or being arrested adds to the legal difficulty of obtaining justice later.

*Source: Brejcha, Thomas, Esq., and Terry Hodges. Law and Order. Pro-Life Action League. Compact disc.*

## Is legal help available for a pro-lifer who encounters difficulties with police?

It is advisable for the organizers of any pro-life demonstration to have on hand the phone number of an attorney who can offer immediate assistance if the pro-lifers encounter a problem with a police officer or department.

The Thomas More Society Pro-Life Law Center in Chicago specializes in defending the rights of pro-life activists. They can be reached at 312-782-1680.

*Source: Brejcha, Thomas Esq., and Terry Hodges. Law and Order. Pro-Life Action League. Compact disc.*

## ABOUT PLANNED PARENTHOOD

Because of the central place held by Planned Parenthood in promoting and providing abortion, anyone sharing the pro-life message should know some basic information about this organization. Most of the information below is from Planned Parenthood's 2008-2009 annual report, which includes figures from calendar year 2008, the most recent period for which data is available.

### How many abortions does Planned Parenthood perform each year?

In 2008, Planned Parenthood performed 324,008 abortions, or approximately 27% of all abortions, making them the largest abortion provider in the United States. While the overall number of abortions performed nationwide increased by 0.005% from 2005 to 2008, the number of abortions performed at Planned Parenthood facilities increased by 22% during this time.

Sources:

Planned Parenthood Federation of America. 2010, September. Fact Sheet. [http://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/PPFA/fact\\_ppservices\\_2010-09-03.pdf](http://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/PPFA/fact_ppservices_2010-09-03.pdf).

Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Planned Parenthood Federation of America 2005-2006 Annual Report. [http://www.lifeissues.org/pp/report\\_05-06.pdf](http://www.lifeissues.org/pp/report_05-06.pdf).

## Aren't abortions only a small percentage of the services Planned Parenthood provides?

While Planned Parenthood officials claim that abortions constitute only 3% percent of their services, this figure is misleading. Out of the 10.9 million individual services they provided in 2008, 324,008 were abortions—roughly 3%. But this figure fails to account for the fact that a woman visiting Planned Parenthood for an abortion will receive several services—from a pregnancy test to some manner of counseling to the abortion itself—each of which is counted separately.

A closer look at Planned Parenthood's client and income numbers shows that the abortion figure is actually three times what they claim. Of the 3 million Planned Parenthood clients in 2008, 11% got abortions. Moreover, abortion accounts for approximately a third of Planned Parenthood's total income from clinic services.

- ▶ See also "**How much money does Planned Parenthood make on abortion?**" on page 80 and "**What is Planned Parenthood's annual budget?**" on page 79.

Source: Planned Parenthood Federation of America. *Planned Parenthood Federation of America 2008-2009 Annual Report*.  
[http://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/PPFA/PP\\_AR\\_011011\\_vF.pdf](http://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/PPFA/PP_AR_011011_vF.pdf).

Planned Parenthood Federation of America. 2010, September. *Fact Sheet*.  
[http://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/PPFA/fact\\_ppservices\\_2010-09-03.pdf](http://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/PPFA/fact_ppservices_2010-09-03.pdf).

## Does Planned Parenthood provide safe abortions?

Since abortion was made legal across the United States in 1973, hundreds of women have been killed as a direct consequence of abortion, many of them at Planned Parenthood facilities. In one recent example, a Planned Parenthood Clinic in Riverside, CA inserted laminaria into the cervix of a 21-year-old woman named Edrica Goode, failing to observe that she had a vaginal infection. The infection spread, and she died a few days later. Her family sued Planned Parenthood for malpractice.

▶ See also “**If you make abortion illegal, women will die**” on page 43.

Moreover, Planned Parenthood consistently resists state measures that would make their centers safer by requiring them to conform to the same safety standards as other surgical centers—standards which in most states are not imposed on abortion facilities.

Sources:

*Life Dynamics Inc. The Blackmun Wall.* [http://www.lifedynamics.net/Pro-life\\_Group/Pro-choice\\_Women/](http://www.lifedynamics.net/Pro-life_Group/Pro-choice_Women/).

*Los Angeles Times. Abortion procedure caused death of Riverside woman, lawsuit alleges.* <http://articles.latimes.com/2007/jun/21/local/me-abortion21>.

*Missourian. Missouri law may restrict abortions.* <http://www.columbiamisourian.com/stories/2007/07/23/missouri-law-may-restrict-abortion/>.

## How is Planned Parenthood organized?

Planned Parenthood is comprised of a national headquarters—the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA)—and 85 affiliates across the United States. Each Planned Parenthood affiliate operates local facilities in a given state or region. In all, the affiliates operate a total of more than 820 individual facilities.

The PPFA International Program operates in 20 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Planned Parenthood operates its own facilities in these countries as well as partnering with existing medical institutions to advance contraception and abortion in the developing world.

Finally, the Planned Parenthood Action Fund Political Action Committee (PPFAPAC) lobbies on behalf of Planned Parenthood's agenda in the halls of government, seeking to keep abortion unrestricted by law, win funding for Planned Parenthood affiliates, and support pro-choice candidates.

*Source: Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Planned Parenthood Federation of America 2008-2009 Annual Report. [http://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/PPFA/PP\\_AR\\_011011\\_vF.pdf](http://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/PPFA/PP_AR_011011_vF.pdf).*

*Planned Parenthood Federation of America. International Program. <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/about-us/international-program-18972.htm>.*

*Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Planned Parenthood at a Glance. <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/about-us/who-we-are/planned-parenthood-glance-5552.htm>.*

## What is Planned Parenthood's annual budget?

The annual budget of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and its affiliates for fiscal year 2008-2009 was \$1,067,800,000—over one billion dollars.

*Source: Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Planned Parenthood Federation of America 2008-2009 Annual Report. [http://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/PPFA/PP\\_AR\\_011011\\_vF.pdf](http://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/PPFA/PP_AR_011011_vF.pdf).*

## How much money does Planned Parenthood receive from taxpayers?

The Planned Parenthood Federation of America and its affiliates received \$363,200,000 in taxpayer dollars during the 2008-2009 fiscal year, the most recent year for which data is available. Public funds thus constitute more than one third of Planned Parenthood's annual budget.

*Source: Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Planned Parenthood Federation of America 2008-2009 Annual Report. [http://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/PPFA/PP\\_AR\\_011011\\_vF.pdf](http://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/PPFA/PP_AR_011011_vF.pdf).*

## How much money does Planned Parenthood make on abortion?

Planned Parenthood's income from abortion in 2008 was approximately \$130 million.

- ▶ See **“What are the various methods of abortion?”** on page 24.

Source: Planned Parenthood Federation of America. *Planned Parenthood Federation of America 2008-2009 Annual Report*. [http://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/PPFA/PP\\_AR\\_011011\\_vF.pdf](http://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/PPFA/PP_AR_011011_vF.pdf).

## Doesn't Planned Parenthood refer for adoption as well as offering abortion?

Planned Parenthood lists adoption referrals as one of the services they provide, but evidence from their own internal reporting reveals that adoption is a very low priority for them. In their annual report for 2005, the number of adoption referrals was omitted. For 2008, Planned Parenthood reported only one adoption referral for every 135 abortions.

- ▶ See also **“How many children have you adopted?”** on page 39.

Sources:

Planned Parenthood Federation of America. *Planned Parenthood Federation of America 2005-2006 Annual Report*. [http://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/PPFA/Annual\\_report.pdf](http://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/PPFA/Annual_report.pdf).

Planned Parenthood Federation of America. *Planned Parenthood Federation of America 2008-2009 Annual Report*. [http://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/PPFA/PP\\_AR\\_011011\\_vF.pdf](http://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/PPFA/PP_AR_011011_vF.pdf).

## Where does Planned Parenthood stand on abstinence education?

Planned Parenthood opposes all abstinence education programs. In spite of the growing evidence that such programs are highly effective, Planned Parenthood actively opposes any program endorsing the message that sex should be reserved exclusively for marriage. They insist that such issues as premarital sex, contraception, masturbation, homosexuality, and abortion must be presented as personal choices without any inherent moral character.

Sources:

Rector, Robert E. *The Effectiveness of Abstinence Education Programs in Reducing Sexual Activity Among Youth*. The Heritage Foundation. <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Abstinence/BG1533.cfm>.

Planned Parenthood Federation of America. *Abstinence-Only Programs*. <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/resources/research-papers/abstinence-6236.htm>.

## Where does Planned Parenthood stand on parental involvement laws?

Planned Parenthood strongly opposes laws requiring parental involvement in minor girls' abortions, though such laws are supported by 69% of the American public. Though parental approval is required for a minor girl to get her ears pierced or take an aspirin dispensed by the school nurse, Planned Parenthood insists parents have no right to know if their daughters get abortions.

- ▶ See also “**What legal restrictions on abortion have states enacted?**” on pages 66-67.

Sources:

Gallup. *Americans Favor Parental Involvement in Teen Abortion Decisions*. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/20203/Americans-Favor-Parental-Involvement-Teen-Abortion-Decisions.aspx>.

Planned Parenthood Federation of America. *Teens, Abortion, and Government Intrusion Laws*. <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/PPFA/fact-teenagers-abortion.pdf>.

## Does Planned Parenthood shelter child predators?

There is mounting evidence that Planned Parenthood facilities routinely fail to report cases of statutory rape and child sex trafficking. They have even been caught coaching underage girls on how to procure abortions while avoiding mandatory reporting and parental involvement laws. Undercover videos gathered by independent investigators suggest this may be standard Planned Parenthood practice nationwide.

Sources:

*Life Dynamics International. Child Predators Project.* <http://childpredators.com>.

*Live Action. Mona Lisa Project.* <http://liveaction.org/monalisa>.

*Live Action. Exposing Planned Parenthood's Cover-Up of Child Sex Trafficking.* <http://liveaction.org/traffick>.

## Is Planned Parenthood helping to reduce abortion by providing contraception?

Planned Parenthood officials frequently claim that they want to reduce abortion by providing contraceptives, but the belief that making contraceptives widely available will reduce abortion is not supported by the facts.

- ▶ See also “**Why don’t you hand out contraceptives if you really want to reduce abortion?**” on pages 46-47.

Source: *Guttmacher Institute. 2011, January. Facts on Induced Abortion in the United States.* [http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb\\_induced\\_abortion.html](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html).

## Is it true that Planned Parenthood provides high-quality, low-cost contraception?

Planned Parenthood officials frequently declare that one of their central missions is to provide high-quality, low-cost contraceptives, but the evidence suggests otherwise. Condoms distributed by Planned Parenthood were rated among the worst available in a study by *Consumer Reports* magazine. And Planned Parenthood has been exposed for dramatically overcharging their clients for Plan B emergency contraception; pills purchased for \$4.25 to \$4.50 were resold for \$25 to \$32—a markup of 400-600%.

Sources:

*Consumer Reports*. *Consumer Reports Presents Facts on 17 Contraceptive Methods to Help Readers Compare and Decide What's Best for Them*. <http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/cu-press-room/pressroom/archive/2005/02/eng0502tcv.htm?resultPageIndex=1&resultIndex=1&searchTerm=condom>.

Stanek, Jill. *Planned Parenthood accused of overcharging CA for contraceptives*. [http://www.jillstanek.com/archives/2008/03/planned\\_parenth\\_31.html](http://www.jillstanek.com/archives/2008/03/planned_parenth_31.html).

## Is it true that Planned Parenthood's founder promoted racist views?

Planned Parenthood's founder, Margaret Sanger, was a strong advocate of eugenics—the policy of preventing certain races, classes or groups from procreating in order to “improve” the genetic stock of a society. Sanger wrote about the need to control the population of blacks and other minorities through contraception and sterilization. In her 1932 “Plan for Peace,” Sanger stated that the U.S. should “keep the doors of immigration closed to the entrance of certain aliens whose condition is known to be detrimental to the stamina of the race.” She even spoke at a Ku Klux Klan gathering in Silver Lake, New Jersey in 1926.

Sources:

Sanger, Margaret. 1932. *Plan for Peace*. Birth Control Review 16, Number 4: 107-108.

Sanger, Margaret. 2004. *Margaret Sanger: An Autobiography*, 366-367. Kessinger Publishing.

## Does Planned Parenthood share Sanger's views on race?

While Planned Parenthood today repudiates racism, they continue to target their services disproportionately to minority populations. While blacks comprise only 13% of the population, 30% of women in the United States having abortions are black, due in no small part to Planned Parenthood's conscious placement of many of their facilities in neighborhoods primarily populated by minorities. In fact, more blacks are killed in the womb at Planned Parenthood facilities in three days than were lynched by the Ku Klux Klan in their entire history.

An undercover investigation in 2008 showed Planned Parenthood officials across the country gladly accepting donations being offered by a man who claimed he specifically wanted his donation to go towards abortions for black women, in order to reduce the black population.

Sources:

Guttmacher Institute. 2011, January. *Facts on Induced Abortion in the United States*. [http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb\\_induced\\_abortion.html](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html).

Live Action. *The Advocate: Issue 3*. <http://www.laadvocate.com/Advocate3.pdf>.

Maafa 21. 2009. *Life Dynamics, Incorporated*. Film.

Zangrando, Robert L. 1991. *Lynching*. In *The Reader's Companion to American History*, ed. John A. Garraty and Eric Foner, 684-686. Houghton Mifflin.

## Is Planned Parenthood deliberately trying to change its image?

Planned Parenthood has launched a nationwide campaign to create a more hip, upscale image and appeal to a wealthier, suburban clientele. One Planned Parenthood official told the *Wall Street Journal* that Planned Parenthood wants to become the “Lens Crafters of family planning.” In recent years they have concentrated on building more upscale facilities in suburban locations, rather than the low-cost facilities in urban centers they emphasized in past decades.



Source: Simon, Stephanie. 2008. *Planned Parenthood Hits Suburbia: Abortion Provider Goes Upscale, Aid for Poor Questioned*. *Wall Street Journal*. June 23, Front Page.

## GETTING HELP

The pro-life movement is dedicated to sharing a message of hope and offering real assistance to women facing untimely pregnancy, as well as to women and men who are dealing with the painful aftermath of abortion. The information provided below is some of the most critical information a pro-lifer may have to offer.



## Where can a woman get help with an untimely pregnancy?

Pregnancy resource centers (PRCs) nationwide provide free services, including confidential counseling, help dealing with family problems, medical care, housing assistance, and job placement assistance. They also provide free maternity and baby clothes, diapers, and baby furniture. Two national organizations can help women find local PRCs:

### **National Life Center Help Line**

*Phone:* 800-848-LOVE

*Website:* [NationalLifeCenter.com](http://NationalLifeCenter.com)

### **Option Line**

*Phone:* 800-395-HELP

*Website:* [PregnancyCenters.org](http://PregnancyCenters.org)

Pregnancy resource centers are always in need of donations of money, baby items and volunteer time, providing an ideal opportunity for those who care about needy mothers and their children to take action on their behalf.

## Where can a woman find out about placing her baby for adoption?

Many of the pregnancy resource centers that can be reached through the national referral organizations listed above can also offer women help placing their babies for adoption. In addition:

**Bethany Christian Services** specializes in adoptions.

*Phone:* 800-BETHANY

*Website:* [Bethany.org](http://Bethany.org)

**Catholic Charities** can help women place their babies for adoption, regardless of their religious affiliation.

*Phone:* 703-549-1390

*Website:* [CatholicCharitiesUSA.org](http://CatholicCharitiesUSA.org)

- ▶ See also “Where can a woman get help with an untimely pregnancy?” on page 89.

## Where can a woman get help dealing with the pain of abortion?

Dealing with the aftermath of abortion can be extremely painful. Several resources are available to help.

**Project Rachel** is a nationwide network for individual post-abortion counseling.

*Phone:* 800-5WE-CARE

*Website:* [HopeAfterAbortion.com](http://HopeAfterAbortion.com)

**Rachel's Vineyard Ministries** provides weekend retreats for women to facilitate post-abortion healing.

*Phone:* 877-467-3463

*Website:* [RachelsVineyard.org](http://RachelsVineyard.org)

**Silent No More** offers women the opportunity to speak out about their abortion experiences and help other women to avoid the suffering they have experienced.

*Phone:* 800-707-6635

*Website:* [SilentNoMoreAwareness.org](http://SilentNoMoreAwareness.org)

- ▶ See also “Is help available for men who have been involved with abortion?” on page 92.

## Is help available for men who have been involved with abortion?

It is not only women who suffer from the aftermath of abortion. The abortion experience can be very painful for men as well, and help is available.

### **Men's Abortion Recovery (MARC) Ministries**

offers outreach to men suffering with the aftermath of abortion.

*Phone:* 610-384-3210

**Fatherhood Forever Foundation** seeks to help men hurt by abortion through a program of awareness, inspiration and healing.

*Website:* [FatherhoodForever.org](http://FatherhoodForever.org)

**Men and Abortion Network (MAN)** helps men locate a local counselor for dealing with the pain of abortion.

*Website:* [MenAndAbortion.net](http://MenAndAbortion.net)

In addition, the book *Men and Abortion: A Path to Healing* by C.T. Coyle is an excellent resource for men involved with abortion.

- ▶ See also “Where can a woman get help dealing with the pain of abortion?” on page 91.

## Where can parents get help dealing with a poor prenatal diagnosis?

Finding out that the baby they are expecting will be born with special needs is one of the most difficult experiences parents can face. But they are not alone.

Other parents who have faced this painful situation—including pressure from doctors and others to abort the child—are there to help at [BeNotAfraid.net](http://BeNotAfraid.net). Parents whose unborn babies have been diagnosed with Down Syndrome can find specific help at [DownSyndromeBrochure.com](http://DownSyndromeBrochure.com).

## RESOURCES

In addition to the selected resources on various topics listed below, see the citations throughout this handbook for additional resources.

### **How to Share the Pro-Life Message & Answering Common Pro-Choice Arguments**

Alcorn, Randy. *Pro-Life Answers to Pro-Choice Arguments*. Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2000.

Crutcher, Mark. *Pro-Life Answers*. Denton, TX: Life Dynamics International, 2006.

Klusendorf, Scott. *The Case for Life: Equipping Christians to Engage the Culture*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2009.

Life Training Institute. <http://prolifetraining.com>.

Spitzer, Robert J. *Healing the Culture: A Commonsense Philosophy of Happiness, Freedom and the Life Issues*. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2000.

Wagner, Stephen. *Common Ground Without Compromise*. Signal Hill, California: Stand to Reason Press, 2008.

### **Life in the Womb & Abortion Facts**

Clowes, Brian. *The Facts of Life: An Authoritative Guide to Life and Family Issues*. Front Royal, VA: Human Life International, 1997.

Just the Facts: Life Before Birth, Your First Nine Months. <http://www.justthefacts.org>

Nilsson, Lennart. *A Child is Born*. New York: Delta, 2003.

Tsiaris, Alexander. *From Conception to Birth: A Life Unfolds*. New York: Doubleday, 2002.

Willke, John C., and Barbara H. Willke. *Abortion: Questions and Answers*. Cincinnati, OH: Hayes Publishing Company, Inc., 2003.

## **Pro-Life Legal Issues**

Americans United for Life. 202-289-1478. <http://aul.org>.

Brejcha, Thomas Esq., and Terry Hodges. *Law and Order*. Pro-Life Action League. Compact disc.

Linton, Paul. *Abortion Under State Constitutions*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2008.

Thomas More Society Pro-Life Law Center. 312-782-1680. <http://thomasmoresociety.org>.

## **Planned Parenthood**

Stop Planned Parenthood (STOPP) International. 540-659-4171. <http://stoppinternational.org>.

Life Decisions International. <http://www.fightpp.org/>

## **Getting Help with an Untimely Pregnancy**

National Life Center Help Line. 800-848-LOVE. <http://nationallifecenter.com>.

Option Line. 800-395-HELP. <http://pregnancycenters.org>.

## **Getting Help with Post-Abortion Healing**

Project Rachel. 800-593-2273. <http://hopeafterabortion.com>.

## **Pro-Life Books, Bumper Stickers and other Materials**

Life Cycle Books. 800-214-5849. <http://lifecyclebooks.com>

Heritage House. 800-858-3040. <http://hh76.com>

Pro-Life World. 937-339-5648. <http://store.prolifeworld.com>

## **Additional Pro-Life Resources Online**

Abort73.com. <http://abort73.com>.

Dunigan, Christina. Real Choice. <http://realchoice.blogspot.com>.

Generations for Life. <http://generationsforlife.org>.

LifeSiteNews. <http://lifesitenews.com>.

Priests for Life. <http://priestsforlife.org>.

Pro-Life Action League. <http://prolifeaction.org>.

Stanek, Jill. <http://jillstanek.com>.

# ABOUT THE PRO-LIFE ACTION LEAGUE

The Pro-Life Action League is the nation's foremost grassroots pro-life organization, founded by Joe

Scheidler in 1980 to save babies and their mothers from abortion through peaceful direct action.



The League is a recognized leader in sidewalk counseling, public protest, media relations, youth outreach and defending the civil rights of pro-life activists. The League is a 501(c)(3)

not-for-profit organization, subsisting entirely on charitable donations.

## Sharing the Pro-Life Message

This handbook was composed by the staff of the Pro-Life Action League, including Joe Scheidler, Ann Scheidler, John Jansen, Matt Yonke, Corrina Gura and Annie Casselman, under the direction of project manager Eric Scheidler. Handbook design by Michelle Dellinger. Fourth printing, February 2011.

## PRO-LIFE ACTION LEAGUE

6160 N. Cicero Ave., Ste. 600

Chicago, Illinois 60646

773-777-2900

**ProLifeAction.org**

**Find the Pro-Life Action League on Facebook:**

**<http://prolifeaction.org/Facebook>**

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How to Share  
the Message

**Pages 10-16** **LIFE IN THE WOMB**

Life in the  
Womb

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Abortion  
Facts

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PRO-CHOICE ARGUMENTS**

Pro-Choice  
Arguments

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Questions  
of Law

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Planned  
Parenthood

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Getting  
Help

How to Share  
the Message

**You're at the block party and a neighbor asks about the pro-life bumper sticker on your car. How do you explain your pro-life beliefs?**

Life in the  
Womb

**At Thanksgiving dinner, your sister-in-law casually mentions that she just sent a donation to Planned Parenthood. How do you respond?**

Abortion  
Facts

**A co-worker confides that her niece just found out she's pregnant, and the family is pressuring her to get an abortion. What do you say?**

Pro-Choice  
Arguments

If you've ever had to share or defend the pro-life message—with family, friends, co-workers, neighbors or complete strangers—this handbook is for you.

*Sharing the Pro-Life Message* arms you with the facts, figures and reasoned arguments you need to talk to anyone about abortion with compassion and conviction.

Questions  
of Law

For a copy of this handbook and information on bulk pricing, contact the Pro-Life Action League.

Planned  
Parenthood

## **PRO-LIFE ACTION LEAGUE**

6160 N. Cicero Ave., Ste. 600  
Chicago, Illinois 60646  
773-777-2900  
[ProLifeAction.org](http://ProLifeAction.org)

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