

Stem cell

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Current Event Summary: Abortion The article on the MSN news website (Dann, about Texas governor Rick Perry's evolving views on the of abortion is reported under the heading of " news" and not editorial or opinion. The news event in question is apparently a statement made by Governor Perry in Iowa on Tuesday 27th December 2011 referring to a recent change of thinking that he has undergone, after watching a film called " The Gift of Life" which features the grown up child of a pregnancy caused by rape. This would normally be a matter of interest mainly in Texas, but due to the fact that Governor Perry was in Iowa as part of his his campaign for nomination in the 2012 campaign for election as President of the United States this " transformation" in his views is being interpreted as an event of national significance. The election campaign is not mentioned directly, but it forms the backdrop to the whole discussion. Dann reports in effect that there has been a shift in Governor Perry's position from a qualified anti-abortion stance, allowing exceptions for some situations, to an absolute anti-abortion position, which would prevent women from having the option of abortion even in cases where there is rape and/or incest involved.

The context of the quotation from Governor Perry is given in full, namely a meeting at the Full Faith Christian Center in Chariton in which there was a question asked about whether signatories to the " Personhood USA" pledge really mean what they say when they sign up to absolute prevention of abortion. The author raises the possibility that perhaps Governor Perry was making this statement simply as part of his electioneering stance, and that perhaps he may not have meant it sincerely, only to demolish this theory with definitive statements from unnamed " Viewers" (Dann, 2011, p. 1) who confess initial scepticism, but ultimate belief in Governor Perry's change of

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heart. The pastor, too, adds his support to this interpretation.

This is a significant piece of news because it reflects one of the key policy areas that the new President will have to decide upon once elected. Abortion is a hotly contested area of on-going debate in the United States, with strong views on both sides of the fence, ranging from those who argue for free choice for all women in all circumstances, to those who, like Perry in this article, appear to argue for the absolute banning of abortion. Most people sit somewhere along this spectrum, with a willingness to take on board the views of others to a certain extent. I think this article raises interesting questions not only about the subject of abortion, which is important and should be fully debated, but also about the implications that arise when potential Presidents of the United States have pledged themselves to a definitive position on a key issue. This implies that even if a democratic vote were to be in place in favour of abortion, Governor Perry would, if he were President, be obliged to use his powers to oppose it, and this could be a problem for many voters.

References

Dann, Carrie. " ' Transformation': Perry now opposes all abortion, even in rape or incest cases." MSN news website. 27th December, 2011. Available at: http://firstread.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2011/12/27/9751161-transformation-perry-now-opposes-all-abortion-even-in-rape-or-incest-cases