

When does life begin essay



**ASSIGN
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When Does Life Begin In 2010 1. 2 million abortions were reported in the United States alone. Of that 1. 2 million 728, 000 were performed at less than 9 weeks, 217, 000 were between 9 to 10 weeks, 118, 000 were performed between 11 and 12 weeks, and 142, 000 were performed at 13 weeks or longer after fertilization. However these numbers do not fully account for all abortions, these are only the abortions that were reported to the United States Census bureau (5, NPG).

It is my understanding that thousands of impoverished women in the United States still receive illegal abortions without the hand of an actual doctor. In this paper I will discuss the controversial topic of abortion. Abortion has to be one of the most controversial topics in America and across the globe. Many people and societies have very different views on the legality of abortion. In the United States there primarily two opposing beliefs on abortion you are either pro-life or pro-choice. Carolyn Gargaro a Pro-Life advocate states that “ abortion is a matter of life and death of an innocent human being. Pro-Life views are that of that at the point of conception human life begins; they believe abortion is murder of an innocent human life that should be given its inalienable human rights at the point of conception (1, NPG). According to Pro-Choice advocates “ Pro-choice abortion is the belief that women have the right to choose to abort a baby from their body. The “ pro-choice” view is that a baby does not have human rights within the mother’s womb (4, NPG).

” Or you may be like me one of the few in the middle on this argument. I believe life begins at the point of conception or fertilization.

However, I do believe abortion should be accepted under certain circumstances, such as proven cases of rape, incest, or if the pregnancy seriously threatens the life of the mother. There are many different views as to when human life begins, according to the National Right to Life website, “ The life of a baby begins long before he or she is born. A new individual human being begins at fertilization, when the sperm and ovum meet to form a single cell. If the baby’s life is not interrupted, he or she will someday become an adult man or woman. This is the belief many biological experts share, along with pro-life advocates and supporters (7, NPG). Another belief is that human life begins at 22 weeks into a pregnancy that is when brain activity begins. This view point is based on the definition of death; death is defined from a medical standpoint as when the brain ceases to have activity. Dr. David A Jones Director of Bioethics at Oxford stated, “ If the point of death is defined as a lack of electrical activity in the brain’s cerebral cortex one might use the same criteria to define the start of human life.

One might argue that fetal life becomes human person when electrical activity commences in the cerebral cortex. Human personhood, would then start when consciousness begins and ends when consciousness irrevocably ends (2, NPG). ” Another belief is that human life begins at 15 weeks into gestation. This belief is based on the facts that miscarriages or spontaneous abortions generally occur fairly early in the pregnancy usually before the 15 week mark. Given this fact many believe that if nature can decide to abort

the baby early in the pregnancy the mother should be given the same right as nature.

Ruth Colker of Indiana University summarized this belief best when she said, " One might argue that the fetus is not potential life until nature has determined the true potentiality of that life by deciding whether to abort the fetus spontaneously. At a minimum, I would argue that a woman should have control over this period of spontaneous abortion (usually lasting until week 13 or 15 of the pregnancy) by deciding whether she wants to choose an elective abortion (2, NPG). " Finally there are a select few pro-choice supporters who believe that human life does not begin until the baby leaves the womb of the mother during birth.

With this belief no human rights are given to any unborn fetus, therefore the mother has the right to abortion at any point during the pregnancy. However this belief is not medically accepted for legal abortions, a doctor in the United States will only perform an abortion after 22 weeks if the pregnancy threatens the life of the mother. Outlined below are a few facts of fetal development from the New England Journal of Medicine article titled The Limits of Viability.

- 7 Days- Fetus implants into mother's uterus
- 18 Days- Heart begins to beat 21 Days- Begins pumping its own blood through closed circulatory system
- 28 Days- Eye, ear, and respiratory system form
- 8 Weeks- All bodily systems are present
- 16 Weeks- Sex of fetus clearly defined

- 22 Weeks- Brain waves recorded in Cerebral Cortex (3, pg. 1597)

In conclusion we as human beings have all been through the development process in our mother's womb. However human beings as a whole can still not agree on when we earn our right to life. We will continue to ask ourselves for years to come when human life begins?

I believe we will never be able to scientifically prove one belief from another, or classify just one belief as correct. I found no articles in the Detroit Free Press or in The Guardian newspaper relating to my topic for this paper.

Works Cited

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