

The debate, which
has already turned
emotional



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The national debate on abortion concerns both the legal as well as the moral aspects of the issue. The debate has not only grown provocative but it has also become very divisive as well, effectively polarizing Americans into those who support the practice and those who oppose it.

The debate, which has already turned emotional, has devised labels for the two opposing camps. Pro-abortion Americans are referred to as “ anti-life” or “ pro-choice” while those who are against the practice have been called “ pro-life” and “ anti-choice” (Internet Infidels, 2005). In other words, if one goes by these labels, a woman who resorts to abortion is guilty of putting an end to life by exercising her choice. One who is against the practice of abortion, on the other hand, is all for allowing the life of a fetus to continue.

It is also the contention of the “ pro-lifers” or the anti-abortion camp that it is the duty of government to prohibit women to end their pregnancy through abortion, thereby illegalizing the practice. Abortion advocates, on the other hand, maintain that women should be given a choice whether to continue or discontinue their pregnancies and that government should not interfere with this choice.

Some people also use the terms secularists and atheists to refer to advocates of abortion while most anti-abortion Americans are said to belong to the different Christian denominations in the country. This only goes to show that anti-abortion Americans consider themselves to be God-fearing while viewing those who favor abortion as non-believers (Religious Tolerance. org, 2008).

Labels notwithstanding, proponents and opponents of abortion have offered their own arguments in support of their positions. While there are those who

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argue in favor of abortion for the simple reason that they believe it to be their right to choose whether to bring their pregnancy to fruition or discontinue them for their own personal reasons, many pro-abortion Americans favor abortion only under specific circumstances.

One situation where pro-choice advocates really insist on abortion is when the pregnancy endangers the life of the woman. According to them, in such a situation, it is better to opt for an early abortion and save the life of the pregnant woman than wait for the fetus to fully develop and risk killing the mother or cause her to suffer from permanent disability because of the pregnancy.

Another situation is when the pregnancy is the result of rape and incest. They argue that rape and incest are heinous crimes which produce highly traumatized victims.

When these crimes result to pregnancy, the victims are consequently tortured since their pregnancy serve as a constant reminder of their harrowing experience. If abortion is not allowed in such cases and the women ultimately give birth, the lives of both the women and their children would be hell.

Still another is when prenatal tests show that the fetus is either malformed that life after birth would only be for a few hours or a few days, or that the child would be so retarded that his or her life would only be one suffering after another. Abortion proponents claim that ending such a pregnancy would be an act of mercy (Religious Tolerance. org, 2008).

Opponents of abortion, however, have rejected the arguments put forth by its advocates. First, they argue that ending pregnancies resulting from rape and incest is completely immoral. According to them, abortions in such cases amount to “killing an innocent child because of the crimes of her father.”

They do not subscribe to the belief that doing away with the evidence of the crime (the pregnancy) would ultimately mitigate the situation. Instead, they maintain that while criminals should be punished for their crimes, the innocent should be allowed to live.

Second, opponents of abortion take exception to the argument that it is the right of the pregnant woman to decide whether to have an abortion or not. According to them, if the pregnant woman believes that she has certain rights, the child that she is carrying also has the right to live (Johansen, 1996).

Finally, pro-life advocates maintain that children are God’s gift to man and that their parents are simply their caretakers. Children, therefore, should be allowed to live the life that God had planned for them (D’Silva, 2007).

Personally, I believe that abortion is an issue that should be treated on a case to case basis. Although it is generally believed that a fetus is already a form of life, the moment its existence would prove fatal to the mother, abortion should be allowed.

My reason is simple: if a pregnancy could kill the mother, then it is better to abort it than risk the life of the mother and possibly that of the child. I am also convinced that even if the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest, such crimes are not enough to punish the innocent by killing the children of

rapists and incestuous fathers. Indeed, children should never be punished for the sins of their fathers.

References

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