

Life Issues Persuasive

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The life issues, though incredibly important for individuals and our society as a whole, are seldom spoken of. There is somewhat of a fear and reluctance to discuss them, and consequently the fundamental questions are swept under the rug, better avoided than to stir up the dust of controversy. Right? Maybe. I believe that it is time for citizens of all nations and of all political and religious beliefs to come together for informed discussion so we may reach an understanding of where to stand on these crucial issues.

I would like to focus on the life issue of abortion because abortion affects the greatest number of lives and is the most controversial. Nearly 50 million abortions have been performed in the United States alone since the ruling of Roe v. Wade in 1973. That's 50 million unborn Americans affected, and the countless women, men, and families that are affected. On a basic biological level, human development begins at conception, so why is there so much disagreement? Is it really a question of opinion of when human life begins, or of when human rights begin? It seems illogical that life could begin at different times for different people – shouldn't there be only one answer? The underlying question is: What is the unborn? If it is not a human, no justification for abortion is necessary. If it *is* a human, no justification for abortion is adequate. The game of politics often distracts from this fundamental question by introducing factors such as public funding and economic motives, different court rulings in similar situations, and the rhetoric or careful choice of wording when talking about the issue. And as many Americans think, What about the right of the woman? Well, no one has the right to take away the rights of another. If the unborn is in fact a human being, it seems the rights of a woman might conflict with the constitutional rights of an equally valuable unborn person. Though we should be knowledgeable about all factors involved, we must above all remain focused on that key question: What is the unborn, and once we know the answer, what does that say about abortion?

My goal tonight is to persuade you to educate yourselves and stay informed on the abortion debate and what kind of bills and initiatives are being proposed for law. The individual states in this country hold different legislation regarding the restriction, availability, and funding of abortion. Does anyone know where Michigan stands with its abortion laws? Michigan is actually the #1 pro-life state. Abortion is legal, but before getting an abortion, a pregnant woman must be given extensive information on the procedures of abortion and the availability of public services that would allow her to choose an alternative. The opportunity to view an ultrasound, parental notification and consent, and measures for a minimum standard of health and safety in abortion clinics is provided for through Michigan law. Michigan taxpayer money does not fund abortions except in the very few cases when the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest or the woman's life is in danger. Since 1973, many restrictions on abortion have been written into the constitutions of other states as well, and there has been federal action too. For example, in April 2007, a federal ban on partial birth abortion was passed. Also, the Mexico City Policy does not allow our tax money to be used to fund abortions in other countries.

Conversely, there is an initiative being considered right now called the Freedom of Choice Act, or FOCA. Has anyone heard of this, and does anyone know anything about it? FOCA would place in our United States Constitution the fundamental right to abortion (alongside other fundamental rights like the right to free speech and the right to vote). It would override every

state and local regulation or policy on abortion. Taxpayers would be required to fund abortion. All hospitals, including private hospitals and religiously affiliated hospitals, would have to offer the service of abortion. Abortionists would not even have to be licensed physicians. While a 17 year old girl needs parental consent to be given Advil in her school, a 13 year old girl would not need to notify her parents before getting an abortion. Basically, the availability of abortion would be unlimited and unrestricted, and would be legal for any reason and at any time during pregnancy. Clearly, there are many factors involved here, and politicians and citizens of both major parties and various religious views feel that this initiative is just too radical.

I encourage you to get involved. At least stay informed – do not be unknowledgeable or apathetic. This is not just a single issue. The sheer number of lives involved and the impact that abortion has on our entire culture and our future necessitate the involvement and continued education of all our citizens.