

WINNING THE WAR OF WORDS:

Rebuttals to Abortion Arguments

Often we are confronted with the rhetoric of the pro-abortion movement. At work, in the media, in school, at shopping malls, and in social settings among friends, pro-life advocates are familiar with the flow of one-sided claims and misinformation put forth by those who favor abortion rights.

While this rhetoric may appear logical on its face, and many of us know people who have been swayed by its simplicity, the words ring hollow when we look for the meaning behind them.

Those of us who believe in preserving the sanctity of life can effectively expose these shallow statements by challenging those who are pro-abortion to defend their arguments.

Following are examples of some common pro-abortion arguments as well as suggestions on how to respond to them in your everyday efforts to protect all human life.

ARGUMENT

Abortion is a matter of individual choice because no one can say with certainty when a fetus becomes a person.

Every woman has the right to control her own body. A fetus is part of a woman's body because it is dependent on her for survival in the womb.

The government shouldn't interfere in this highly personal issue.

REBUTTAL

When a human life begins is not a religious, moral, or philosophical issue; it is a scientific and biological one. Scientists know a distinct human life begins at conception. From that time onward, the unborn child is a living, developing individual with a uniquely human genetic constitution.

All human beings have rights which must be protected. A woman has a right to protect her own body. Her child, too, has rights, beginning with the right to continued life. The unborn child is an individual, separate and distinct from the mother. From the time of conception, the baby's genetic code is unique to itself, different from the mother's and father's. The baby has its own blood type, heart, brain, and other organs, and may have differently colored eyes, hair and complexion. Being dependent on others should not deprive a helpless human being of fundamental rights.

As Thomas Jefferson once wrote: "The care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction, is the first and only object of good government." In modern American society, it is naive to suggest that government can be absent from this debate on human life. The government acts through law to regulate in areas much less fundamental than the right to life. The real issue is whether the government will fulfill its responsibility to protect and preserve life, or continue to allow this most fundamental human right to be denied.

ARGUMENT

A woman may need an abortion because of personal circumstances that make it impossible for her to care for a young child.

Abortion is used only as a last resort and is frequently a result of rape, incest, or danger to the mother's life. A woman must have the right to terminate her pregnancy because of these widespread problems.

Abortion should be available to women who may give birth to severely disabled infants. Disabled children may face a terrible life of pain if they are not aborted.

Americans who are "pro-choice" do not necessarily advocate abortion, but believe in an individual's right to choose an abortion. Even many elected officials who are personally opposed to abortion support the right of others to choose.

If safe and legal abortions are not available, women will be driven to dangerous back-alley abortions, resulting in needless injury and even death.

REBUTTAL

A woman has many choices for life. If she wishes to raise her child, there are countless programs across the country that can provide her with counseling, housing, medical care, job training, food, clothing, and other needed services to help her make a good life for herself and her child. If a woman feels that she cannot provide for her baby, adoption can be a good choice for both mother and child. Children's lives should not be sacrificed as a means of solving the problems of others.

The truth is that abortion has become a widely used method of birth control in this country. By 1992, 46 percent of all abortions were repeat abortions. Last year, approximately 1.5 million abortions were performed in the U.S. At most, about 1 percent of these were performed for reasons of rape or incest, less than 7 percent to protect the mother's health. Abortion advocates fail to mention the other 92 percent.

It is inhumane to use abortion to set artificial standards of quality for human life. No one has the right to judge the quality of another human being's life, or to decide who should live and who should not. The fundamental value of human life is a given, it is not determined by an individual's physical or mental capacities.

There is no convenient middle ground when a human life is at stake. Law is a powerful teacher; many are persuaded that when something is legal, it is morally good. The actions of politicians who say "personally opposed but . . ." fail to mirror their purported conviction that abortion destroys human life. The American public wants to elect real leaders, not those who succumb to political expediency on fundamental issues of human rights.

It should be remembered that a death occurs every time an abortion is performed — the death of an unborn child. It should also be remembered that abortion is a surgical procedure, and even though it is legal, it puts many woman at serious mental and emotional risk. Additionally, many women suffer post-abortion complications, such as cervical muscle damage and damage to the uterine wall, which can lead to scarring, future miscarriages, or ectopic pregnancies. Since the Supreme Court's 1973 abortion decision, hundreds of women have died from what pro-abortion groups insist on calling "safe and legal" abortions.

