

## Pro & Con Arguments: "Should abortion be legal?"

### PRO Legal Abortion

1. A woman's right to choose abortion is a "fundamental right" recognized by the US Supreme Court in the Jan. 22, 1973 case [Roe v. Wade](#) (342 KB) . [49]
2. A fetus is not a human being. Abortion is terminating a pregnancy, not a baby. Personhood at conception is not a proven biological fact. Personhood begins at birth.
3. Fetuses are incapable of feeling pain when an abortion is performed according to Stuart W. G. Derbyshire, PhD, Senior Lecturer at the University of Birmingham (England). "Not only has the biological development not yet occurred to support pain experience, but the environment after birth, so necessary to the development of pain experience, is also yet to occur." [10]
4. Access to legal, professionally-performed abortions reduces injury and death caused by unsafe illegal abortions. The World Health Organization estimated in 2006 that "back-alley" abortions cause 68,000 maternal deaths each year in countries where abortion is not legal. [11]
5. The anti-abortion position is usually a religious belief and threatens the vital separation of church and state. Religious ideology should not be a foundation for law in the United States.
6. Modern abortion procedures are safe. The risk of a woman's death from abortion is less than one in 100,000. [12] Whereas, the risk of a woman dying from giving birth is 13.3 deaths per 100,000 pregnancies. [13] Furthermore, a 1993 fertility investigation of 10,767 women by the Joint Royal College of General Practitioners and Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists found that women who had at least two abortions experienced the same future fertility as those who had at least two natural pregnancies. [14]

### CON Legal Abortion

1. Unborn babies are innocent human beings from the moment of conception. They have a fundamental right to life, which must be protected.
2. The Sixth Commandment of the Bible's Old Testament (Exodus 20:13) is "Thou shalt not kill." Abortion involves killing a human being and defies a commandment from God. [23]
3. Fetuses feel pain during an abortion according to Kanwaljeet J. S. Anand, MBBS, DPhil, Professor of Pediatrics, Anesthesiology and Neurobiology at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center. "If the fetus is beyond 20 weeks of gestation, I would assume that there will be pain caused to the fetus. And I believe it will be severe and excruciating pain." [24]
4. The original text of the Hippocratic Oath, the oath that doctors traditionally take when swearing to practice medicine ethically, forbids abortions. One section of the oath reads: "I will not give a woman a pessary [a device inserted into the vagina] to cause an abortion." The modern version of the Hippocratic Oath written in 1964 by Luis Lasagna also forbids abortion in its line, "Above all, I must not play at God." [25]
5. The [Declaration of Independence](#) (33 KB)  [51] states that "[A]ll men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Allowing abortion directly contradicts the Founding Fathers' intentions for an inalienable right to life in this country.
6. Women should use contraceptives, not abortion, to prevent unwanted pregnancies. A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study showed that [19-25% of women who received abortions in 2006 had previously had one or more abortions.](#) (474 KB)  [52] If abortion were not

7. Access to abortion is necessary because contraceptives are not always easily available. Women need doctor prescriptions to buy many birth control methods, such as the pill, the patch, the shot, and the diaphragm. About half of all large group-insurance plans do not cover any form of prescription contraception, and only a third cover the birth control pill. A July/Aug. 2001 Guttmacher Institute study of health care insurers found that 75% of insured women lacked coverage for contraceptive services. [15] As of 2009, 17 million US women are completely uninsured. [16]
8. The American Medical Association (AMA) recognizes abortion as a medical procedure if performed by a licensed physician in conformance with good medical practice standards. There are about 1,800 licensed physicians who provide abortions in the United States. These doctors, not politicians, should have the authority to make medical decisions regarding abortion. [17]
9. Abortion gives couples the option to choose not to birth babies with severe and life-threatening medical conditions. Fragile X syndrome, the most common genetic form of mental retardation, affects about 1 in 4,000 males and 1 in 8,000 females. One in 800 babies have Down Syndrome, and one in 3,500 babies are born with Cystic Fibrosis. [18] It is not right to sentence a child to life with an acute handicap.
10. A Sep. 2005 survey in the peer-reviewed journal *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* asking women why they had an abortion found that 73% of participants said they could not afford to have a baby, and 38% claimed giving birth would interfere with their education and career goals. Reproductive choice helps prevent women from experiencing financial harm. [19]
11. Motherhood must never be a punishment for having sexual intercourse. President Barack Obama said in a Mar. 29, 2008 campaign speech in Johnston,

available, women would not be so careless.

7. Abortions cause psychological damage. A 2002 peer-reviewed study published by the *Southern Medical Journal* of more than 173,000 American women found that women who aborted were 154% more likely to commit suicide than women who carried to term. [26] An Apr. 1998 *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* study on men whose partners had abortions found that 51.6% of the men reported regret, 45.2% felt sadness, and 25.8% experienced depression. [27]
8. There is a lack of adoptable babies because abortion is legal. Over two million couples are waiting to adopt babies, and only 134,000 US children are available to be adopted as of June 2002. [28] [29] [The percentage of infants given up for adoption has declined from 9% of those born before 1973 to 1% of those born between 1996 and 2002](#) (447 KB)  [53] Instead of having the option to abort, women should give their unwanted babies to people who can not biologically conceive.
9. Selective abortion based on genetic abnormalities (eugenic termination) is overt discrimination. Physical limitations don't make those with disabilities less than human. The [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](#) (110 KB)  [54] provides the civil rights protection needed for people born with disabilities to lead fulfilled lives.
10. Abortion is an instrument of genocide against African Americans. Black women are 4.5 times as likely as white women to have an abortion. [30] 1,876 black babies are aborted every day. Between 1882 and 1968, 3,446 Blacks were lynched in the US. In less than three days in 2010 more black babies are killed by abortionists. [31]
11. The abortion industry makes an estimated \$831 million annually. [32] An abortion can cost anywhere from around \$350 to more than \$1,000. [33] Abortion entrepreneurs are more interested in making money than assisting their clients.
12. Abortion eliminates the potential societal

Pennsylvania, "I have two daughters... I'm going to teach them first about values and morals, but if they make a mistake, I don't want them punished with a baby."

12. Abortion lowers crime. Some estimates claim that legalized abortion accounted for as much as 50% of the drop in murder, property crime, and violent crime between 1973 and 2001. Teenage girls, unmarried women, and poor women are more likely to have unintended pregnancies. Unwanted babies are often raised poor, increasing their chances of leading criminal lives in adulthood. [20]
13. A baby should not come into this world unwanted. [49% of all pregnancies among American women are unintended](#) (159 KB)  . [50] Birthing children is an important lifelong decision that requires responsible consideration, preparation, and planning.
14. Abortion should be legal because it is an effective tool in population control. Malnutrition, starvation, poverty, lack of medical and educational services, pollution, underdevelopment, and conflict over resources are all consequences of overpopulation. [21]
15. The science behind the theory that abortion increases the likelihood that women will develop breast cancer is unsubstantiated. The National Cancer Institute (NCI), the American Cancer Society (ACS), and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) have all refuted the reliability of studies claiming an association between breast cancer and abortion. [22]

contributions of a future human being. The US would be an entirely different country if the mothers of our nation's heroes, great presidents, scientists, athletes, and others had chosen abortion.

13. Abortion increases the likelihood of future miscarriages. A June 2003 study published by the peer-reviewed *International Journal of Epidemiology* estimated that about 15% of first-trimester miscarriages are attributed to prior history of induced abortion. [34]
14. Abortion increases the likelihood that women will develop breast cancer. In early pregnancy, levels of estrogen increase, leading to breast growth in preparation for a woman to milk her child. When the process is interrupted by abortion, immature cells are left in the woman's breasts, resulting in a greater potential risk of breast cancer. [35] Since 2006, eight medical organizations including the Breast Cancer Prevention Institute, the Catholic Medical Association, and the National Physicians Center for Family Resources have recognized the connection between abortion and breast cancer. [36]
15. The 2001 claim by *Freakonomics* author Steven Levitt that abortion reduces crime is flawed. Economists at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston found coding errors in Levitt's research. In response to their revelation, Levitt apologized and said on Nov. 28, 2005 that he was "personally embarrassed" about his errors. [37] [38]