

The Catholic Church and Pro-Life Apologetics

How to respond to pro-abortion arguments

What is abortion? Why does it matter?

Definition of abortion: *intentional* ending/killing of an unborn life

***Ectopic pregnancies/treatment and miscarriage/treatment are NOT Abortions

- 96% of medical professionals say life begins at conception
- It matters because of the numbers...64 million and counting since 1973
- Can fill University of Michigan's Stadium 594 times

<http://www.numberofabortions.com>

Safe, legal and rare - 1992 Bill Clinton

- Which one of these still holds true? Legal



NATIONAL ABORTION HISTORY

- State write own laws, can vary state to state
- 1965 Griswold v. Connecticut
 - Declares that the right to privacy is guaranteed by the Constitution
 - Where in Constitution? Word “privacy” not found
 - 14th Amendment in “penumbras”
 - Definition of penumbra: the partially shaded outer region of the shadow cast by an opaque object

NATIONAL ABORTION HISTORY

- 1973 Roe v. Wade
 - Took right to privacy from Griswold and applied it to women's right to abortion
- 1973 Doe v. Bolton
 - Companion decision to Roe v. Wade
 - States can restrict abortion at or after viability
 - Set viability (ability to survive outside of womb) at 28 weeks
 - Restrict except to preserve life or health of mother
 - Does not define what "preserve life or health of mother" thereby leaving the door open to abortion through all nine months of pregnancy
- Declares that a fetus is not a person
 - Fetus cannot enjoy the same rights as a person



NATIONAL ABORTION HISTORY

- 1992 Planned Parenthood v. Casey
- Affirms Roe v. Wade as precedent
- Before viability there can be no undue burden to abortion (Dobbs dispute)
 - What is undue burden?
 - “Substantial obstacle in path of a woman seeking an abortion of a nonviable fetus.”
 - Redefined viability at 23-34 weeks
 - What constitutes undue burden is subject of lawsuits
 - State restrictions such as
 - Requiring doctors to have admitting privileges at local hospitals
 - Waiting periods
 - Requiring ultrasound before procedure
 - Parental notification or consent
 - Safety standards or inspections, licenses

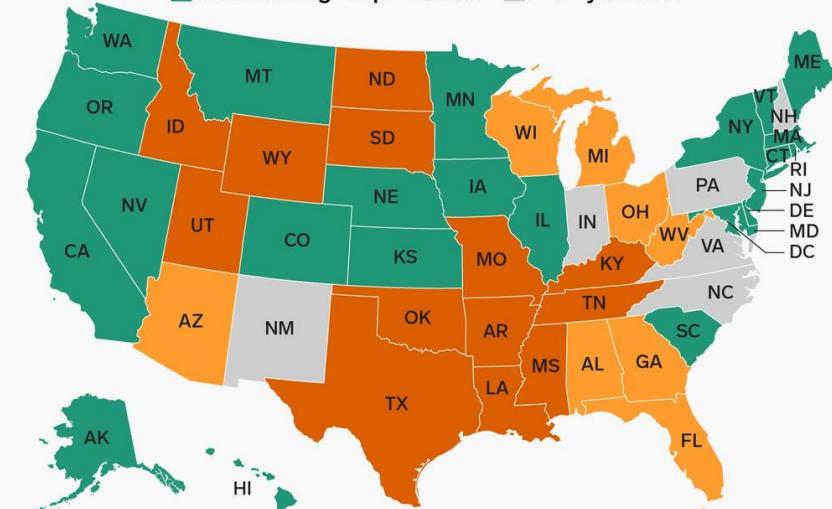
POST-ROE

What does the Dobbs decision mean/say?

- “The Constitution does not confer a right to abortion; *Roe* and *Casey* are overruled; and the authority to regulate abortion is returned to the people and their elected representatives.”
- Abortion is not a federally protected right but rather reverts back to each individual state legislature to either confer, restrict, or allow.
- 22 states have trigger laws or have banned abortion and 4 more are expected to do so
- Ruling does not apply to any other right
- https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/21pdf/19-1392_6j37.pdf

How each state's laws affect abortion rights without Roe v. Wade

■ Abortion banned by trigger laws ■ Abortion will likely be banned
■ Abortion rights protected ■ Policy unclear



ILLINOIS: SENATE BILL 25/Public Act 101-0013

- 2019 Illinois Reproductive Health Act: signed by Governor JB Pritzker
- Declares abortion to be a fundamental right - abortion to remain legal in Illinois regardless of any SC decision
- Abortion can happen at any point in the pregnancy, even up to birth, for any reason
- No right of refusal for medical professionals who do not wish to violate their consciences
- Removes requirement for a physician to perform an abortion allowing nurse practitioners, physicians assistants or someone under the direction of medical professional to perform
- All private insurance must cover abortions with no exceptions for religious groups
- Changes the definition of viability - only applies to those who can survive without medical intervention thereby stripping unborn children of rights
- Abortion clinics and providers do not have to be licensed or pass health inspections
- Abortion provider cannot be penalized for performing abortion on woman who is not pregnant
- Allows for the sale of baby parts and experimentation on unborn babies
- Abortion statistics do not need to be reported: repeat abortions, number of out-of-state abortions and number of underaged girls
- Anyone who dies as a result of abortion - no autopsy, no coroner's report

The Catholic Response

*Where to look for Catholic view on abortion? Deposit of faith

*Scripture *Tradition *Magisterium

"The absolute inviolability of innocent human life is a moral truth clearly taught by Sacred Scripture, constantly upheld in the Church's Tradition and consistently proposed by her Magisterium. This consistent teaching is the evident result of that "supernatural sense of the faith" which, inspired and sustained by the Holy Spirit, safeguards the People of God from error when "it shows universal agreement in matters of faith and morals".

Therefore, by the authority which Christ conferred upon Peter and his Successors, and in communion with the Bishops of the Catholic Church, I confirm that the direct and voluntary killing of an innocent human being is always gravely immoral. This doctrine, based upon that unwritten law which man, in the light of reason, finds in his own heart (cf. Rom 2:14-15), is reaffirmed by Sacred Scripture, transmitted by the Tradition of the Church and taught by the ordinary and universal Magisterium.

John Paul II: Evangelium Vitae

Gospel of Life, 57

SCRIPTURE: WE ARE UNIQUE/DIFFERENT

- Genesis 1:26-31 (Elohist tradition)
 - Made in His image
 - Male and female
 - First commandment: Be fruitful and multiply
 - Dominion over the earth and all in it
- Genesis 2:18-24 (Yahwist tradition)
 - Not good for man to be alone - no fit helper among the animals
 - Create woman
 - One flesh union
- Psalm 8:4-8 The value of man in God's eyes
- John 3:16
- Romans 5:6-11



SCRIPTURE: CHILDREN ARE A BLESSING

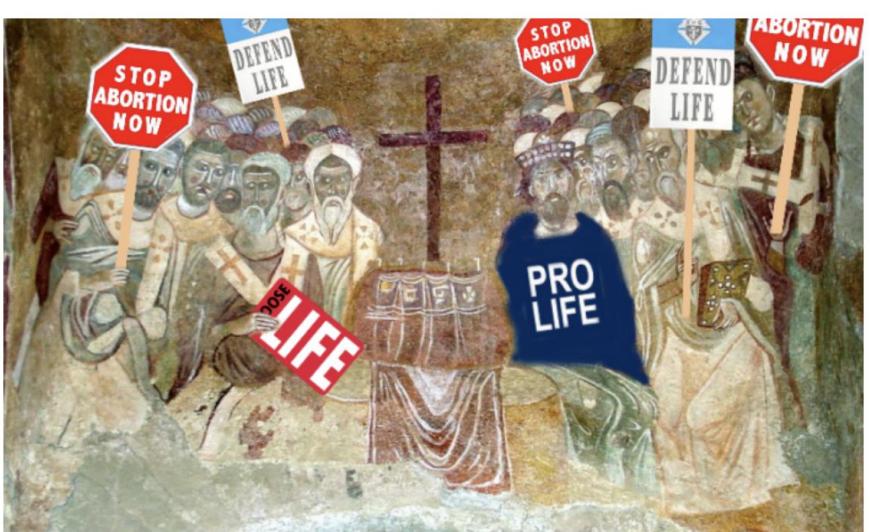
- Genesis: Be fruitful and multiply
- Genesis 4:1
 - Co-creators with God
- Psalm 127:3-5
- Psalm 128



SCRIPTURE: UNBORN CHILDREN HAVE VALUE

- Jeremiah 1:5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”
- Psalm 139:13-14 “For you formed my inward parts, you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am wondrously made. Wonderful are your works!”
- Isaiah 49:1 “The Lord called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name.”
- Galatians 1:15 St. Paul writes: “But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal His Son to me.”

TRADITION: EARLY CHURCH WRITINGS



ChurchPOP / Public Domain / Wikimedia Commons

- The Didache
- Tertullian
- Basil the Great
- Saint John Chrysostom
- Saint Jerome

MOTHER TERESA

Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta:

- “Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching its people to love, but to use any violence to get what they want. This is why the greatest destroyer of love and peace is abortion.
- “The greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion, because it is a war against the child, a direct killing of the innocent child. And if we accept that a mother can kill even her own child, how can we tell other people not to kill one another?”
- “Abortion kills twice. It kills the body of the baby and it kills the conscience of the mother.”
- “Abortion is profoundly anti-women. Three quarters of its victims are women: half the babies and all the mothers.”



THE MAGISTERIUM

Teaching Authority of the Church - given by Christ to Church to proclaim the Gospel, Christ's teachings



Pope and Bishops



Documents, Apostolic letters, Encyclicals

Catechism of the Catholic Church

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

5th Commandment: Thou shall not kill

2258 "Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being.

Abortion:

2270 Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception.

From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person - among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life. (Donum Vitae)

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you. (Jer 1.5)

My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately wrought in the depths of the earth. (Ps 139.15)

2271 Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion.

This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable.

Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law:

You shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the newborn to perish. (Didache 2,2)

God, the Lord of life, has entrusted to men the noble mission of safeguarding life, and men must carry it out in a manner worthy of themselves.

Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception: abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes. (Gaudium et Spes, #3)

2272 Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense.

The Church attaches the canonical penalty of excommunication to this crime against human life.

"A person who procures a completed abortion incurs excommunication latae sententiae," (Canon Law 1398) "by the very commission of the offense," (Canon Law 1314) and subject to the conditions provided by Canon Law. (1323-24)

The Church does not thereby intend to restrict the scope of mercy.

Rather, she makes clear the gravity of the crime committed, the irreparable harm done to the innocent who is put to death, as well as to the parents and the whole of society.

2273 The inalienable right to life of every innocent human individual is a constitutive element of a civil society and its legislation:

"The inalienable rights of the person must be recognized and respected by civil society and the political authority.

These human rights depend neither on single individuals nor on parents; nor do they represent a concession made by society and the state; they belong to human nature and are inherent in the person by virtue of the creative act from which the person took his origin.

Among such fundamental rights one should mention in this regard every human being's right to life and physical integrity from the moment of conception until death." (Donum Vitae, III)

"The moment a positive law deprives a category of human beings of the protection which civil legislation ought to accord them, the state is denying the equality of all before the law.

When the state does not place its power at the service of the rights of each citizen, and in particular of the more vulnerable, the very foundations of a state based on law are undermined....

As a consequence of the respect and protection which must be ensured for the unborn child from the moment of conception, the law must provide appropriate penal sanctions for every deliberate violation of the child's rights." (Donum Vitae, III)

MAGISTERIUM WRITINGS

- Vatican II: Pastoral Constitution On the Church in the Modern World, 51: “For God, the Lord of life, has conferred on men the surpassing ministry of safeguarding life in a manner which is worthy of man. Therefore from the moment of its conception life must be guarded with the greatest care while abortion and infanticide are unspeakable crimes.”
- Humanae Vitae 14, Pope Paul VI: “Therefore We base Our words on the first principles of a human and Christian doctrine of marriage when We are obliged once more to declare that the direct interruption of the generative process already begun and, above all, all direct abortion, even for therapeutic reasons, are to be absolutely excluded as lawful means of regulating the number of children.”
- Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith - Declaration on Procured Abortion, 1974
- CDF - Clarification on Procured Abortion, 2009
- CDF - Donum Vitae: Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation, 1987
- CDF - Dignitas Personae: Instruction on Certain Bioethical Questions, 2008
- Encyclical Letter Evangelium Vitae (The Gospel of Life), John Paul II 1995

What is apologetics?

- “Reasoned arguments or writings in justification of something.” (Oxford Dictionary)
- “Apologetics is a practical way of using logic and facts to help others lift their eyes from base, inconsequential distractions and gaze upward to contemplate the truth in all its beauty. Apologetics accomplishes this task by offering those who will listen rational explanations and defense of the truth.”
(Patrick Madrid, *How to Do Apologetics*, p.14)
- Truth is OBJECTIVE, it is knowable and we are programmed to want to seek it and know it

Jesus answered “ ... For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”

John 18:37

Seek
the
Truth...

BEFORE YOU ENGAGE

Educate yourself:

Pro-choice arguments and talking points

Definitions of keywords

Abortion procedures: medical vs surgical

Fetal development: <https://illinoisrighttolife.org/science-of-life/>

Facts vs Emotions

Know your resources - especially post-abortive counseling



Rules of engagement

- Pick your moments
 - Public space
 - Social Media
 - Recognize opportunities
 - Goal
 - Not to win the argument
 - Plant seeds
 - Avoid religious arguments
 - Assess the risk
-
- Attitude/Approach
 - Non-confrontational
 - Guide the conversation
 - Ask questions to discover their argument
 - Ask questions to make them justify
 - Control emotions
 - Be confident, not cocky
 - Know when to stop/back off

PRO-LIFE STATEMENT

Quick 30 second to 1 minute “speech” to summarize your pro-life stance

Memorize it and practice it

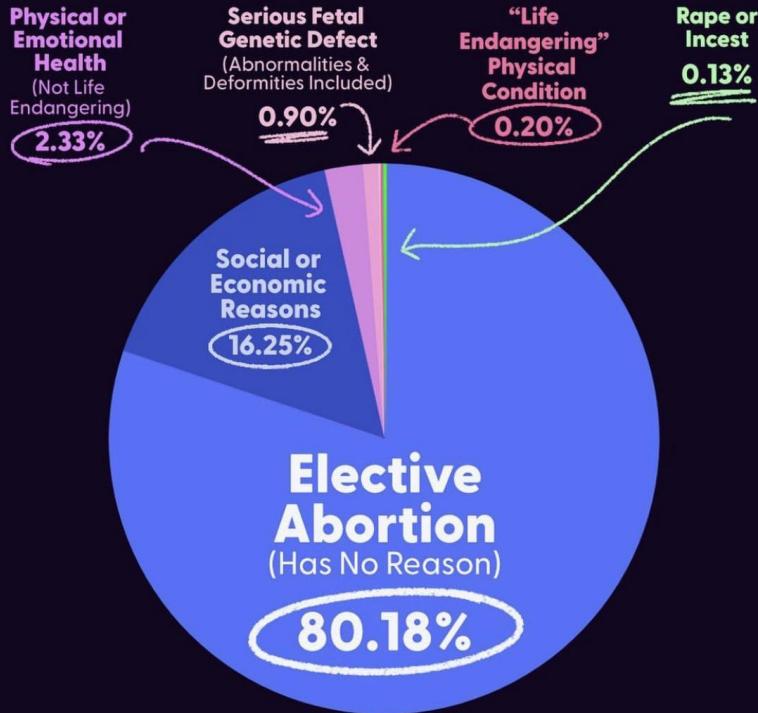
I am pro-life because...

I am **pro-science**: life begins at conception, 96% of physicians concur and because it is a human life, I believe **social justice** begins before that baby is born. All unborn babies deserve equal protection under the law.

I am **pro-woman**: abortion exploits women and allows them to be used by men and convinces women to despise their fertility and see it as an obstacle rather than embrace it



Reasons Women Get Abortions



Why abortion is the *Un-choice*:

- 64% of women reported feeling pressured to abort.
- Most felt rushed or uncertain, yet 67% weren't counseled.
- 79% weren't told of available resources.
- 84% weren't sufficiently informed before abortion.
- Pressure to abort can escalate to violence.
- Homicide is the leading killer of pregnant women.
- Clinics fail to screen for coercion.
- Women nearly 4 times more likely to die after abortion.
- Suicide rates 6 times higher after abortion.
- 65% of women suffer trauma symptoms after abortion.

Why abortion is the *Unsafe Choice*:

- Nearly 80% of abortions take place in non-hospital facilities, ill-equipped for emergency care.
- 31% had health complications afterwards.
- 65% suffer multiple symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.
- 65% higher risk of clinical depression.
- 10% have immediate complications, some are life-threatening.
- 3.5x higher risk of death from all causes.
- Suicide rates are 6 times higher if women abort vs. giving birth.

Why abortion is the *Uninformed Non-Choice*:

- 54% were unsure of their decision, yet 67% received no counseling beforehand.
- 84% were inadequately counseled beforehand.
- 79% not told or deceived about available resources.
- Many were misinformed by experts about fetal development, abortion alternatives or risks.
- Many were denied essential personal, family, societal or economic support.

It's not alive; it's a clump of cells; no one knows when life begins

Argument: It's not alive, it's just a clump of cells

Rebuttal: Question and make them define the criteria of life

- The seven characteristics what makes an organism living are: Environmental responses, cells, change and growth, reproduction, having complex chemistry, and homeostasis and energy processing

An unborn human being meets all 7 criteria

A preponderance of scientific evidence has proven that life begins at conception or fertilization.

96% of physicians agree and 85% of them self-identify as pro-choice

Importance of ultrasound

RADIANCEFOUNDATION.ORG PRESENTS
"CLUMPS OF CELLS"
IN THEIR MANY STAGES



"It is scientifically correct to say that an individual human life begins at conception."

Dr. Micheline Matthews Roth, Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School

#PROLIFE #PROWOMAN #PROSCIENCE

96%

Of the 5,577 biologists from **1,058 academic institutions** and **86 different countries** affirmed that human life begins at fertilization.

85%

Of the 5,577 biologists identified as pro-choice, **89% identified as liberal** and **95% held a Ph.D.**

63%

Identified as **non-religious**.

Embryo/Fetus is a “potential” human being

Argument: Embryo/fetus is not human so not a moral crisis

Rebuttal: How do you define a human being?

Embryo and fetus are terms that refer to human beings

They are two stages of development no different than infant, toddler, child, adolescent, adult, elderly

If life is viewed as a timeline, what is the starting point?

An embryo/fetus does not become a human being - he/she is already a human being; he/she will not develop into any other living being; fully human



Alive vs. When life matters



Argument: An embryo or fetus may be alive but abortion is acceptable at or before certain points during the pregnancy

At what point/at what gestational age is it no longer acceptable to terminate life? Make sure to keep the conversation on the baby and not on external or emotional circumstances

*Fetus feels pain...so killing people as long as they feel no pain is ok?

*Heartbeat detected...heartbeat is a sign of life, early as 18 days after fertilisation

Ask them to define their criteria and give supporting evidence

Goes back to previous argument that embryo/fetus is one developmental stage in the growth of a human being. If it is acceptable to terminate at this stage, then it becomes acceptable to terminate at ANY stage.

Viability/Size/Development

Argument: Abortion is acceptable before a fetus is viable, or up to a certain size or stage of development

Rebuttal: Viability is an arbitrary determination of rights based on dependency

- Apply to many other health conditions
- Apply to other ages of development
- Viability is different for geographic location and available technology
- Location should not determine value or dignity (womb, hospital, nursing home)

Size and development are also arbitrary arguments

- Dignity and value not determined on size, smaller actually need more help/protection
- Those in certain stages of development also need protection (toddler, elderly)

PERSONHOOD

Argument: Abortion is acceptable because the fetus/baby is not a person

Rebuttal: “Personhood” is an arbitrary term used to marginalize or dehumanize groups of people. If the baby is not recognized as a person, it is easier to deny them their right to life.

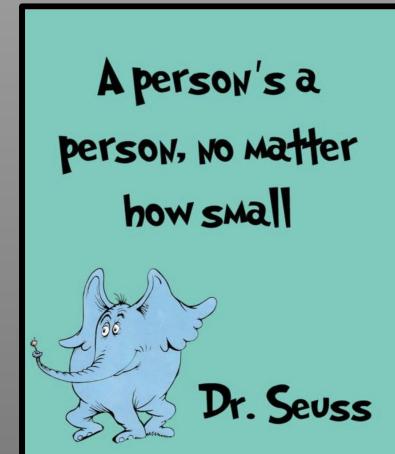
African Americans/Blacks

Jews

Women

Immigrants

You are either a person/human being or you are not.



MY BODY MY CHOICE

Argument: A woman has the right to choose what happens to her body; no one should make laws about women's reproductive healthcare choices; decision should be made between a woman and her doctor

Rebuttal: Yes, a woman has every right to determine medical treatment for her own body...not the right to do whatever she wants to another body, especially if it is to harm them

One person's rights end where another one's begin: I can swing my fist up to the point where it would inflict harm to another



MY BODY MY CHOICE

There is scientific evidence that an embryo/fetus/unborn baby is a separate and genetically distinct human being from the mother. S/he is not a body part with the same genetic material receiving direction from the mother's brain.

DNA

Different gender/sex

Different blood types

The unborn baby directs his/her own growth



Mom's rights are superior to unborn baby's rights

Argument: Given the particular circumstances of the mother, she determines that life would be better/easier without the child and she has the right to terminate

Rebuttal: Which is right is superior: the right of the mom to keep the lifestyle she is accustomed to or the right to life of the unborn baby

Permanent solution to a temporary problem

Society teaches that children are burdens not blessings

Yes...it is hard but you need to work the problem, find the resources, be the support system (PCCs)



- *I cannot afford a baby right now
- *Having a baby would affect my career
- *I am in school and I won't be able to finish
- *I already have enough children
- *My husband left me/getting a divorce
- *FOB does not support me or children
- *My parents will kick me out

Women do have choices

Argument: Women should not be forced to remain pregnant; women have the right to choose

Rebuttal: Yes! Women have the right to choose - but the choice should be made whether or not to engage in sexual behavior that would result in a child; actions have consequences...we are free to choose but we are not free from the things that result as a consequence of our actions especially when they result in the termination of a life

Rebuttal: Yes! Women have lots of choices...abstinence, motherhood and adoption are all very good choices.

Rebuttal: What exactly does the right to choose mean? Can you define the action involved and the consequences?

*Forced pregnancy is meant to be an emotionally charged argument; treats pregnancy like a disease or other medical decision; not teaching responsible behavior

CHOICES:

a ABSTINENCE

c RESPONSIBILITY

b ADOPTION

d SEX EDUCATION

PRO-LIFE IS NOT ANTI-CHOICE



So every child makes their mark

What about rape and incest?



"My son was conceived in rape, but that doesn't define his value or his humanity."

-- Robyn McLean
Pro-Life Speaker
www.savethe1.com

Argument: A woman should not be forced to carry a baby conceived in rape or incest

Rebuttal: The rapist should go to prison. Rape/incest is never acceptable. It is a crime. My heart goes out to the woman/girl who is a victim.

However, abortion does not remove the rape; it can actually add to the pain (2 wrongs don't make a right)

Human dignity is not based on the circumstances of conception...who gets to decide where and when they are conceived?

There is no other situation where the child is punished/killed for the crime of the father.

Ultrasound of baby in rape vs. baby conceived in love...difference?

What about the life/health of the mother?

Argument: If the mother's life is in danger, she should be able to abort

Rebuttal: Each individual case is unique but there are some things that can be applied universally.

There are always two patients, the mom and the baby, and both should be taken into consideration. The goal should be saving both but no one in the medical field would put priority to the child of a gestational age of pre-viability

Gestational age of 24 weeks (maybe even earlier): it is safer to deliver the baby than to abort. Abortions at this age take 3 days and involve labor.

Health of the mother is very vague and typically not define or loosely defined by law. It can be used as a reason to terminate at any point of the pregnancy - even up to birth.



Live Action @LiveAction

The treatment for an ectopic pregnancy is NOT an abortion

The treatment for miscarriage is NOT an abortion

The treatment for septic uterus is NOT an abortion

There's a difference between losing a child & murdering a child

Not a single pro-life law impacts these treatments

Imposition of beliefs



Lila Rose ✅
@LilaGraceRose

"If you don't like abortion, don't have one" is like saying:

"If you don't like slavery, don't have a slave"

"If you don't like murder, don't murder anyone"

"If you don't like child abuse, don't abuse your children"

Some choices are always wrong,
especially choices that kill

Argument: If you don't like abortion, don't have one; don't impose your beliefs/morals or your religion on me!

Rebuttal: Society functions with a fixed set of laws that apply to everyone. Murder, theft, rape, child abuse are all illegal. They are wrong in all circumstances and not dependant on individual moral codes. We judge actions and impose consequences.

PRO-BIRTH VS. PRO-LIFE

Argument: All you care about is the baby and forcing women to have children. You do not care about the baby after he/she is born.

Rebuttal: Morality is lacking if your solution is to terminate a life. Yes, life is precious and worth having. Pregnancy centers exist to help mothers find the resources and referrals they need to help after the baby is born. The overwhelming majority of women who have chosen to have their children after contemplating abortion are glad that they did.

Each organization has its own unique mission to fulfill. It is not realistic to expect pro-life institutions to provide things beyond their mission.

YOUR MORALITY IS DEEPLY
LACKING IF ALL YOU WANT
IS A CHILD BORN

BUT NOT A CHILD FED
NOT A CHILD EDUCATED
NOT A CHILD HOUSED

THAT'S NOT PRO-LIFE.

THAT'S PRO-BIRTH.

Pro-life Apologetics Resources

Speaking for the Unborn by Steven A. Christie, M.D., J.D.

What to Say When by Shawn Carney and Steve Karlen

To the Heart of the Matter by Shawn Carney

Ending Abortion by Fr. Frank Pavone, M.E.V.

Persuasive Pro-Life: How to Talk about Our Culture's Toughest Issue by Trent Horn

Pro-Life Answers to Pro-Choice Arguments by Randy Alcorn

Various YouTube clips by Ben Shapiro

Community Resources

Pregnancy Care Centers: Aid for Women

Maternity Homes: Aid for Women

Material Aid: Catholic Charities

Maternity and Pregnancy Support/Adoption: Catholic Charities

Post-abortive Healing: Hope After Abortion, Project Rachel, Catholic Charities

Financial Support: Saint Vincent de Paul, Project Love

Remember local food pantries, soup kitchens



What can I do?

- Be a witness to the truth
- Pray: offer rosaries, adoration, 40 Days for Life, Life Chain, Vigil for Life
- Spiritual adoption: Jesus, Mary and Joseph...I love you very much. I beg you to spare the life/lives of the unborn child/ren I have spiritually adopted who is/are in danger of abortion.
- Know your faith so you can defend your position to other Catholics: 1 Peter 3:15-16 “Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence; and keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.”
- Support your local pregnancy centers
- Know the resources in your area including post-abortive healing: Catholic Charities, Project Rachel
- Vote for pro-life candidates

What can I do?

- Get on email lists of pro-life organizations or on social media
 - Pro-life Action League
 - Illinois Right to Life/Illinois Right to Life Action
 - Illinois Catholic Conference (lobbies for the Church in Springfield)
 - Lake County Right to Life/ Northwest Families for Life
 - March for Life Illinois
 - Live Action
 - And Then There Were None - Abby Johnson
 - Pro-Love Ministries
 - 40 Days for Life
 - Lifesite News
 - Priests for Life
 - Students for Life
 - Sidewalk Advocates for Life

