

A Crash Course in Answering Common Pro-Choice Arguments

The most common arguments pro-choice advocates use to justify abortion can be broken down into 5 basic forms. Below are the arguments, common variations, and pro-life responses with supporting facts. Much of this information was gleaned from Randy Alcorn's excellent book *Pro-life Answers to Pro-choice Arguments* (available online or in bookstores). We have included some information here from the Elliot Institute, an extremely useful source of information on the harm abortion does to women. More material is posted at www.afterabortion.org. (Elliot Institute, P.O. Box 7348, Springfield, IL 62791-7348, (217) 525-8202). Think of this as a crash course! For a more thorough treatment, spend some time with Randy Alcorn's book, explore the Elliot Institute website and the other ones cited, and look into the many fine resources Maine Right to Life Committee can recommend. Arm yourself with knowledge, so that you can become a more effective pro-life advocate for women and their unborn children.

Argument 1: The fetus is not a human being/person.

Variations on this argument:

- When life begins is a religious issue.
- A fetus is only a potential human being or just a blob of tissue.
- It may be human, but it doesn't qualify as a person because _____ (fill in any reason the speaker chooses to disqualify the unborn from "personhood").
- Life begins at _____ (fill in any time of the speaker's choosing, other than fertilization. Most commonly chosen times are implantation, viability, or birth).
- No one knows when life begins.
- The fetus is just part of the woman's body.

Response: It is a scientific fact that from the moment of fertilization, a distinct and unique human being exists.

Supporting Arguments:

- Science tells us that from the first moment of fertilization, the child's sex, hair and eye color, height, and skin tone are determined.
- **From the moment of conception, the entire genetic blueprint for a unique individual is already present.** This is not opinion or religious belief, but scientific fact.
- **The baby has a beating heart 18 days after fertilization and brain waves as early as 6 weeks after fertilization.** Most abortions are not performed until 9 weeks into the pregnancy. Even RU-486 chemical abortions cannot be done until after 6 weeks.
- **Prior to the earliest surgical abortions, the unborn baby already has every body part he or she will ever have.**
- Priests for Life says, "America will not reject abortion until America sees abortion." Invite those who doubt that a child is killed during an abortion to go to www.priestsforlife.org and look at the photos of abortion (WARNING: GRAPHIC MATERIAL). **If someone who supports abortion does not want to see what it really looks like, ask them "Why not?"** If abortion is a simple medical procedure, no more troublesome than a tooth extraction, what would be disturbing about seeing one?

Argument 2: A woman has a right to control her body.

Variations on this argument:

- Everyone has the "right to choose", right to "reproductive freedom", right to privacy.
- It's between a woman and her doctor - it's none of the government's business.
- Women won't ever have equal rights if abortion isn't an option.

I'm personally opposed to abortion, but I have no right to make that decision for someone else.

- A woman shouldn't be forced to: continue a pregnancy against her will, be embarrassed by an out-of-wedlock pregnancy, go through the pain of placing her baby for adoption.

Response: The pro-choice position is based on the idea that regardless of the humanity of the unborn, the woman has rights that are more important. No other right is more important than the right to life. Our country was founded on the principle of equality for all - why should one person's right to "privacy" or "choice" be more important than another's right to life itself?

Supporting Arguments:

- What about all of the **unborn women who will never get to exercise any of their rights**, if they are killed in the womb?
- For all of us, women and men, the **right to control our own bodies ends when we start violating the rights of others**.
- **Every civilized society has laws telling people what they can and can't do with their own bodies, even in the privacy of their own homes!** People who feel they couldn't possibly "tell someone else what to do" regarding abortion are perfectly comfortable telling someone else they can't use illegal drugs or commit incest in the privacy of their homes. There are even legal restrictions on smoking in restaurants or talking on cell phones while driving! Why? Because these actions can endanger an innocent party - **abortion kills an innocent party**.
- A difficult or unplanned pregnancy can cause a woman distress, discomfort, and material or emotional burdens. There is non-judgmental, compassionate help available to women in these circumstances through over 3,000 pregnancy resource centers in the U.S. **No amount of discomfort, embarrassment, or difficulty for one person can justify taking the life of another person.**
- The pro-choice community seeks to portray abortion as a women's rights issue, but the early feminists, such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, recognized the humanity of the unborn and were decidedly pro-life. (See www.feministsforlife.org)
- What could be more anti-woman than saying women must destroy their own children in the womb in order to achieve equality with men?

Argument 3: It is cruel to bring children into the world when they will be unwanted and abused, or live in poverty and misery.

Variations on this argument:

- Every child should be a wanted child.
- Pro-life people oppose abortion - why don't they adopt these babies that no one wants?
- Abortion is necessary to curb the serious problem of overpopulation.

Response: Abortion doesn't prevent suffering or abuse - it is abuse, just perpetrated before birth!

- **Abortion is abuse of unborn children.** To kill a child now in order to prevent possible abuse later is not a compassionate solution.
- **Abortion does not prevent abuse of already born children.** Countries that legalize abortion report sharp increases in child abuse. According to a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services report, **child abuse increased over 500% in the first ten years after the legalization of abortion in America.**
- **Problems such as poverty, lack of education, or job security will not be cured by abortion.** The motive behind it may be compassionate, but we cannot solve the problems of poverty by killing the children of

the poor! The poor mother who is encouraged to have an abortion today is just as poor tomorrow.

- **All children are wanted by someone**, even if they aren't wanted by, or cannot be raised by, their birth parents. In the United States, over 1.5 million couples are waiting to adopt! There are lists of families willing to adopt babies with any medical condition and of any ethnic background. **Even if there were no one who wanted these children, that does not justify killing them! Since when is being unwanted a crime punishable by the death sentence?**
- In areas of the world filled with suffering and disease, **the problem is not overpopulation, but lack of development and uneven distribution of resources**. There is enough space and food to provide for everyone on the earth, as numerous studies have repeatedly shown. It has been calculated that if all of earth's people were gathered together, they would fit inside of the state of Texas!
- **Advocates of "choice" often want to force abortion on women in third world countries**, who have strong cultural and religious beliefs that respect each new life. Real compassion dictates that we help them obtain an adequate supply of safe food and water, medical care, and suitable living conditions.

Argument 4: It would be inhumane to return women to the days when thousands died in back- alley abortions.

Variations on the argument:

- Abortion should be safe, legal, and rare.
- Abortions before *Roe v. Wade* were performed by "butchers" and were hazardous for the mother.
- Abortions after *Roe v. Wade* became safe, easy, and painless.
- Abortion is actually safer than childbirth.

Response: Abortion is always inhumane for the child being aborted! It is also far from safe, easy, or painless for women. Abortion advocates greatly exaggerate the figures on maternal deaths from illegal abortion, while now they greatly minimize the damage done by legal abortion.

Supporting Arguments:

- Abortion supporters claim **that five to ten thousand women died every year from illegal abortions before *Roe v. Wade***. This is **completely untrue**. Dr. Bernard Nathanson at one time presided over the largest abortion clinic in the Western Hemisphere. He was a founder of NARAL (National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League).

To quote Dr. Nathanson:

"I confess that I knew the figures were totally false, and I suppose the others did too if they stopped to think of it." (*Aborting America* by Bernard Nathanson, p 193)

- **90% of abortions performed before *Roe v. Wade* were done by licensed physicians in their offices**. The majority of abortions performed after legalization were being done by the same doctors. How did they switch from being "butchers" before legalization to being caring, competent practitioners afterwards?
- **Widespread use of antibiotics greatly reduced the maternal death rate prior to the legalization of abortion**. In 1972, the year before *Roe v. Wade*, 39 women died from illegal abortions, along with their 39 aborted children. **The most maternal deaths in a year was 388**, in 1948. (There were NOT 5,000-10,000 women who died each year from back alley abortions as erroneously reported those profiting from legalized abortion.)

- **There have been at least 300 maternal deaths in the U.S. from legal abortion since Roe v. Wade.**
- Every year, **more than half a million unborn women die from legal abortions** in the U.S.
- A government study in Finland in 1997 found that **women were four times more likely to die in the year following an abortion than in the year following childbirth.** More recent studies in Canada and California reached similar conclusions.
- A large majority of studies worldwide have shown **significantly greater risk of breast cancer for women who have had abortions.** (For additional information, see www.abortionbreastcancer.com , the Coalition on Abortion/ Breast Cancer). Women who have had abortions are also at greater risk of cervical, ovarian, and liver cancer. They are at higher risk of complications in subsequent pregnancies including: complications of labor, placenta previa, ectopic pregnancy, and handicapped newborns.
- **10% of women undergoing elective abortion will suffer immediate complications, of which approximately 1/5 are considered life threatening.**(the Elliot Institute, www.afterabortion.org)
- Studies show that **women who have had abortions are at a significantly higher risk of suicide** (nine times higher, according to one study).
- From Britain's Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists: "The incidence of serious, permanent psychiatric aftermath is variously reported as between 9% and 59%." That's **117,000 to 767,00 women in the U.S every year with "serious, permanent psychiatric aftermath"!**
- To read the testimonies of women scarred by abortion, see www.afterabortion.org .

Argument 5: Abortion should be allowed for the hard cases of rape, incest, and fetal abnormality.

Response A (rape and incest): Abortion creates another innocent victim and does nothing to heal the mother or punish the perpetrator. In the cases of incest and statutory rape, abortions have been forced on victims by perpetrators seeking to cover up the evidence of abuse.

Supporting Arguments:

- Compassion demands that **family, friends, church, and society must do all they possibly can to support a woman facing pregnancy under these extremely difficult circumstances.** Creating another innocent victim is never a solution!
- **Aborting a child conceived by rape does nothing to punish the perpetrator,** but sentences an innocent child to death.
- **Abortion does not bring healing to a victim of rape or incest.** Research shows that **women with a history of sexual assault may experience even greater distress during and after abortion** than other women and **may experience the abortion as similar to their assault** (Elliot Institute, www.afterabortion.org)

Response B (fetal abnormality): Aborting a child with a disability or illness is the height of prejudice. You do not treat a medical problem by killing the patient!

Supporting Arguments:

- **Our society bends over backwards trying to appear welcoming to the disabled** with handicapped accessible buildings, Special Olympics, special accommodations for service animals, etc., but **pre-natal testing has become a search and destroy mission** to seek out and kill before birth those deemed "less than perfect."

- **All people, regardless of their health status, are fully human beings**, enjoying full human dignity, with the same right to exist as everyone else!
- **There are lists of families willing to adopt babies with any serious medical condition including spina bifida and Down syndrome.**
- Families who are expecting a child with special needs require support, not an abortion! **Most families who abort due to an abnormal fetus regret their decision.** Research studies indicate that women who abort for genetic reasons have a high incidence of suffering grief, guilt, shame, and depression. **The actual incidence of depression following “selective abortion” for genetic reasons may be as high as 92 percent for mothers and 82 percent for fathers among those studied.**(*The Post-Abortion Review*, July-Sept. 2003, Elliot Institute, www.afterabortion.org .<http://www.afterabortion.org>)
- The belief that society was better off without the “genetically inferior” was the credo of **Nazi Germany** where **thousands of people were exterminated solely because they had disabilities.**