

9 Reasons Why Abortions Are Legal

1. Laws against abortion kill women.

When women feel it is absolutely necessary, they will choose to have abortions, even in secret, without medical care, in dangerous circumstances. In the two decades before abortion was legal in the United States, nearly one million women went "underground" each year for illegal operations. Tens of thousands were maimed or died.

2. Legal abortions protect women's health.

For tens of thousands of women with heart disease, kidney disease, severe hypertension, sickle-cell anemia and severe diabetes, and other illnesses that can be life-threatening, the availability of legal abortion has helped avert serious medical complications that could have resulted from childbirth.

3. A woman is more than a fetus.

There is a tremendous spectrum of religious, philosophical, scientific, and medical opinion surrounding the debate of whether a fetus deserves rights equal to women's. Our society has recognized that each woman must be able to make this decision, based on her own conscience. To impose a law defining a fetus as a "person," granting it rights equal to or superior to a woman's — a thinking, feeling, conscious human being — serves to diminish women.

4. Being a mother is just one option for women.

Many hard battles have been fought to win political and economic equality for women. These gains will not be worth much if reproductive choice is denied. To be able to choose a safe, legal abortion makes many other options possible. Otherwise an accident or a rape can end a woman's economic and personal freedom.

5. Outlawing abortion is discriminatory.

Anti-abortion laws discriminate against low-income women, who are driven to dangerous self-induced or back-alley abortions. That is all they can afford. But the rich can travel wherever necessary to obtain a safe abortion.

6. Compulsory pregnancy laws are incompatible with a free society.

There can be no more extreme invasion of privacy than requiring a woman to carry an unwanted pregnancy to term. If government is permitted to compel a woman to bear a child, where will government stop? It violates traditional American ideas of individual rights and freedoms.

7. Outlaw abortion, and more children will bear children.

Forty percent of 14-year-old girls will become pregnant before they turn 20. Here are the critical questions: Should the penalty for lack of knowledge or even for a moment's carelessness be enforced pregnancy and childrearing? Or dangerous illegal abortion? Should we consign a teenager to a life sentence of joblessness, hopelessness, and dependency?

8. "Every child a wanted child."

If women are forced to carry unwanted pregnancies to term, the result is unwanted children. They are among society's most tragic cases, often uncared-for, unloved, brutalized, and abandoned. When they grow up, these children are often seriously disadvantaged. Children need love and families who want and will care for them.

9. Choice is good for families.

Even when precautions are taken, accidents can and do happen. For some families, such an event can be catastrophic. An unintended pregnancy can increase tensions, and cause economic instability. Family planning is the answer. All options must be open.