

ABORTION FACTS

Since 1973, legal abortions performed in the United States total over 55 million.¹ Over the 39 years between 1973 and 2011, abortions have occurred at an average daily rate of 3,868. Over 93% of legal abortions are done primarily for social reasons, and less than 7% primarily for physical reasons (sometimes self-diagnosed) like threat to the mother's life, fetal deformity, rape or incest.²

The American woman's womb has been legally declared a free-fire zone by the U.S. Supreme Court's January 22, 1973 rulings. These rulings allow abortion up to the moment of birth for virtually any reason.³

Although 91.4% of legal abortions are performed within the first 13 weeks of gestation, the remaining 8.6% equal 104,266 of the 1,212,400 legal abortions reported for 2008, a daily rate of 285 done after the first trimester. Forty-three abortions per day in 2008 were done at or after 21 weeks, when the child is considered viable.⁴

In 2008, of those women having legal abortions,
84% were unmarried,
37% were white, 36% were black, 21% were Hispanic, and 6% were from other ethnic groups,
44% were having their second or higher order abortion,⁵ and
46%-60% admitted they were not using contraceptives when they conceived.⁶

In the first 35 years (1973-2007) after *Roe v. Wade*, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control report that the maternal death toll from induced abortion is:

390 from legal abortion (84.6% of the total)
56 from illegal abortion (12.1%) and
15 from abortions whose type was unknown (3.2 %)⁷

Three separate studies have shown that the CDC underreports maternal abortion deaths by 30% to 419%.⁸

Because of a 1976 Supreme Court ruling, a minor child can obtain an abortion without her parents' involvement. Some 37 states have since passed laws which are in force to remedy this situation, although a judicial bypass can still keep parents in the dark. It is the parents' moral, legal, and financial responsibility, of course, to deal with any mental or physical trauma sustained by their daughter as a result of her secret abortion.

The best estimate of the total induced abortions (legal + illegal) occurring in 1966, the last year before the abortion movement began having legislative impact, is 125,000.⁹ Hence, since permissive laws began to be passed in 1967, induced abortions have increased 10 to 12 fold. The number of maternal deaths due to abortions of all types (legal, illegal, and spontaneous) in 1966 was 189.¹⁰ By 1972, the year before *Roe v. Wade*, it had

1. Data from the Alan Guttmacher Institute.

2. Lawrence B. Finer, et al., "Reasons U.S. Women Have Abortions: Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives," *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* 37:3 (September, 2005) 110-118.

3. *United States Supreme Court Reports* 35 L Ed 2d, pp. 183-184, 212-213.

4. Percentage of abortions by gestational age from Karen Pazol, et al. "Abortion Surveillance—United States, 2008" *MMWR Surveillance Summaries* (Nov. 25, 2011) 60 (SS15) 1-73. Number of abortions from R.K. Jones and K. Kooistra "Abortion Incidence and Access to Services in the U.S., 2008" *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* 43:1 (March, 2011) 43.

5. "Abortion Surveillance—United States, 2008," pp. 9-10. (See complete citation in footnote 4 above).

6. See *Family Planning Perspectives* 13:5 (Sept./Oct. 1981) 218-221; 14:2 (March/April 1982) 98-99; 20:4 (July/Aug. 1988) 158-168, and *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* 40:1 (2008) 6-16.

7. "Abortion Surveillance—United States, 2008" Table 25. (See complete citation in footnote 4 above).

8. See Kevin Sherlock, *Victims of Choice*, Akron, OH: Brennyman Books, 1966 and Mark Crutcher, *Lime 5*, Denton, TX: Life Dynamics Inc., 1996.

9. See Cynthia McKnight, *Life Without Roe*, Washington, D.C.: Horatio R. Storer Foundation, 1992 and *The Effects of Changes in State Abortion Laws*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1971, p. 4.

10. National Center for Health Statistics, *Vital Statistics of the United States 1966*, Vol. II Mortality, Part A, Washington D.C.: (1968) 1-40.

decreased to ninety.¹¹ The idea that prior to *Roe v. Wade* thousands of women died each year from illegal abortion is a myth.

When valid questions are asked, poll data show that a majority of Americans have never supported the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision. The public is neither pro-choice nor pro-life, but somewhere in between.¹²

The abortion debate has politicized social science, medicine, and history. Claims that English Common Law recognized a right to abortion prior to and after our country's founding, and that the fetus' right to life was of little or no concern in early law are inaccurate. So are claims that the main reason for passing abortion laws in the 1800s were to protect the health of women, to enhance the medical profession's standing, to enforce gender roles, and to respond to new waves of immigration. While some of these motives played some role in the initiation of 19th century laws, a main reason was to protect human life from conception, a biological process better understood after the discovery of the mammalian ovum in 1827. Given the state of medicine during this period, abortion was a relatively safe procedure, at least as far as short-term effects are concerned. (See footnotes 13-18).

Research over the past five decades has shown that legal abortion has several long-term negative effects on women's health. Thirty of 44 studies find a link between abortion and an increased incidence of breast cancer. Ectopic pregnancies increased almost fourfold between 1970-1989, corresponding to the increase in abortion. These pregnancies were associated with 13% of maternal deaths during this time. At least 65 studies find induced abortion increases the incidence of prematurity and low birth weight in subsequent pregnancies. Prematurity is associated with increased infant deaths and incidence of child diseases, such as cerebral palsy. Subsequent miscarriage is also associated with abortion. Thus, contrary to what the pro-choice movement says, legal abortion does not enhance women's reproductive health, but harms it.

In 2011, a comprehensive review of 22 of the world's best large studies of abortion's impact on women's mental health found that overall, women who had undergone an abortion experienced an 81% greater risk of mental health problems. Specific increased risks for the following were: anxiety disorder 34%, depression 37%, alcohol use/abuse 110%, marijuana use/abuse 220%, suicide behaviors 155%.¹⁹ At least 29 studies show a link between abortion and substance abuse.²⁰

It is a fact that each of us was a human zygote, embryo and fetus at one stage in our life, just as we were infants, children and adolescents later on. The life of an individual human being begins at fertilization, when sperm joins egg. The question, then, is: should we allow some human beings to kill other human beings to solve personal or societal problems, or should we seek solutions to life's problems which enhance the lives of all, born and unborn?

11. Centers for Disease Control, "Abortion Surveillance—United States 1984-1985," *MMWR* (Sept. 1989) 38 SS2, p. 43.

12. Raymond J. Adamek, *Thirty-Plus Years of Abortion Polls: What Have We Learned?* New York: The Ad Hoc Committee, 2002, and Adamek, "American Public Opinion Regarding Late Term Abortion," (Unpublished) May 29, 2009.

13. Robert M. Byrn, "An American Tragedy: The Supreme Court on Abortion," *Fordham Law Review* 41 (May 1973) 807-862, especially 814-835.

14. Robert A. Destro, "Abortion and the Constitution: The Need for a Life-Protective Amendment," *California Law Review* 63: 1250-1351, especially 1267-1282.

15. T. W. Hilgers and D.J. Horan, *Abortion and Social Justice* N.Y.: Sheed & Ward, 1972, especially 120-127, 301-313.

16. Stephen M. Krason and William B. Hollberg, "The Law and History of Abortion: The Supreme Court Refuted," in J. Douglas Butler and David F. Walbert (eds.) *Abortion, Medicine and the Law* (3rd ed.) N.Y.: Facts on File, 1986, 196-225.

17. James C. Mohr, *Abortion in America* N.Y.: Oxford U. Press, 1978, especially 18-19, 30-31, 65, 164-166, 173-174.

18. Ramesh Ponnuru, "Aborting History," *The Human Life Review* 22:1 (Winter 1996) 35-42.

19. Priscilla K. Coleman, "Abortion and Mental Health: Quantitative Synthesis and Analysis of Research Published 1995-2009," *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 199 (2011): 180-186.

20. For documentation of the negative physical and psychological effects of abortion on women's health, see "Legal Abortion Harms Women," available from Right to Life of Northeast Ohio, (330) 762-2785 or rmiller@rtlofneo.com

