

PRO-CHOICE SLOGANS: A CRITIQUE

Abortion rights advocates have a number of clever slogans that seem to beguile many and lead them to believe that being “pro-choice” is the American way. One only has to stop and look a little beyond the slogans to realize that they are seldom stated with the complete thought behind them. When they are completed, their message is anything but attractive.

Complete the Slogan

Consider these slogans (and what they really mean when completed).

- Freedom to choose (to kill an innocent human being).
- Every child a wanted child (and if not wanted, killed by abortion).
- Every woman has a right to control her own body (and to destroy her unborn child’s body).
- Don’t force your morality on me (Let me force my morality on my unborn child by aborting it, and on the public by requiring that tax dollars and insurance premiums pay for abortions).
- Keep your laws off my body (and let me impose my laws fatally on the bodies of the unborn).

Some pro-choice slogans make sense only if you pretend the woman is pregnant with **nothing**. If the woman is pregnant with nothing, you can logically talk about:

- A woman’s right to control her own body. (The unborn human is not her body, but a biologically and genetically distinct individual. Actually, the vast majority of abortions in the U.S. occur because men and women fail to exercise the legitimate control they have over their own bodies. That is, although they do not want to beget or conceive a child, they engage in sexual intercourse, which, whether contracepted or not, can result in conception).
- A safe legal abortion. (Abortion is fatal for the unborn. It is also harmful to women, as over 40 years of medical research demonstrates).
- Not imposing morality on someone else. (There is no more absolute way to impose morality on another than to kill them).
- Every woman deciding for herself (She decides her unborn child’s fate). Legal abortion is somewhat akin to slavery in that it allows one human being to treat another as property to be disposed of at will.

Abortion is a Woman’s Issue, Males Should Have Nothing to Say

If you are a male debating a female pro-choicer, she may try to shut you out of the debate altogether. However, you can point out that, you too are a human being, and have a right to speak out in defense of your unborn brothers and sisters. Moreover, since:

- 1) All unborn human beings are fathered;
- 2) Half of unborn human beings are males;
- 3) Pro-choicers wish to coerce all males to support abortion with their tax dollars and insurance premiums; and

4) Many males also suffer from post-abortion psychological problems, to suggest that you cannot speak out just because you are a male is the height of sexism.

Who Should Decide?

“Who should decide, the woman or the government?” the pro-choicers ask. In a representative democracy, we, through our elected officials, are the government. The laws of the land are the rules we make to try to live together in peace and justice. We all ought to decide the rules by which we live together. Yes, abortion is a personal, individual matter. Ultimately, almost everything in life is. But abortion is inherently a social matter, too. The 1.2+ million annual individual abortion decisions affect us all, whether male or female, young or old.

The pro-abortion ethic (or the pro-life ethic) influences our legal, political, judicial, educational, economic, insurance, tax, familial and even our religious institutions. All of us, therefore, ought to have a say in deciding which ethic we want to influence these institutions, and which ethic we as a society wish to support and promote.

Pro-lifers and pro-choicers agree that there are many serious personal and social problems facing us. The question is, in attempting to solve these problems, should we promote a policy that allows some human beings to kill other (unborn) humans, or should we seek to solve problems only through means that respect the right to life of all?

The signers of the Declaration of Independence didn’t think that we should “get the government out of the issue.” They wrote, “We hold these truths to be self evident, that all 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. That to **secure** these rights, **governments are instituted** “... That is, the government’s very **reason for being** is to secure the right to life and other rights. It is not supposed to “keep out of the issue.”

Why Pro-Choice is Really Pro-Abortion

No one is really for “choice” in general in the abortion debate. We all want some choices to be legally available and others to be illegal. As the table below shows, both pro-lifers and pro-choicers wish to permit some choices and to forbid other choices.

Attitudes of Pro-Lifers and Pro-Choicers Toward Possible Pregnancy Outcomes		
<u>Possible Choices</u>	<u>Pro-Life</u>	<u>Pro-Choice</u>
Carry baby to term, raise	Permit	Permit
Carry baby to term, give in adoption	Permit	Permit
Carry baby to term, kill after birth	Forbid	Forbid
Counsel woman to commit suicide	Forbid	Forbid
Kill unborn child in the womb	Forbid	Permit

Thus, both pro-lifers and pro-choicers are “pro-choice” and “anti-choice” depending on the choice. The only choice the two disagree on is whether to legally permit killing the unborn. Pro-choicers are not simply for “choice,” but for a specific choice – the choice of abortion – being kept legal. It is the

only choice under contention in the abortion debate. Hence, to be pro-choice in this debate is to be pro-abortion.

“Don’t Force Your Morality or Religion On Me”

In the debate over abortion policy, one often hears the statement, “Don’t force your morality (or religion) on me.” This statement reflects the false premise that only pro-life sentiments are based on morality or religion (or more accurately, on theology) whereas pro-choice sentiments are morally or theologically neutral. Such is not the case.

Before we proceed, we must distinguish between religion and theology. Religion signifies an identifiable association of people who hold certain beliefs and practice certain rituals as a way of acknowledging a power or powers greater than themselves. Not everyone belongs to a religion. But everyone does have a theology. That is, they hold certain beliefs about the existence or non-existence of a divine being(s), the nature of that being(s), and how closely it is involved in human affairs, and whether or not the divine being(s) sets guidelines for human behavior.

For example, when atheists say, “There is no god,” they are expressing a theological belief. Polls show that this belief influences their ideas on various issues, including abortion (see table below, recognizing that not everyone who says they have no religion is necessarily an atheist). Similarly, the belief that there is a god influences other people’s attitudes toward various issues, including abortion.

In the case of morality, the belief that “every woman ought to be able to decide for herself about abortion,” is a moral belief about what is good, right, just or fair, just as the belief that abortion should be illegal is based on others’ moral beliefs about what is good, right, just, or fair.

Hence, the question in the abortion debate is not, “Shall we allow one group’s moral/theological beliefs to be forced upon us, or shall we have a morally/theologically neutral abortion policy?” No social policy can be morally or theologically neutral, since all policy tells us what we must, or may do, or must not, or may not do, thus reflecting someone’s moral and theological beliefs. The real question in the abortion debate then is, “What social policy serves the individual and society best?”

Respondent’s Position on Abortion by Degree of Religiousness			
	<u>Respondents Who Say They Are:</u>		
	<u>Very Religious</u>	<u>Fairly Religious</u>	<u>Not Religious</u>
<i>Believe Abortion Should Be:</i>			
Always illegal	22%	7%	4%
Legal in only a few circumstances	46%	41%	22%
Legal in most circumstances	10%	22%	19%
Always legal	17%	29%	52%

(Column percentages do not add to 100% because other answers and refusals were omitted. Source: Gallup Poll, May, 2001).

“If You Don’t Like Abortion, Don’t Have One”

This slogan suggests that if someone doesn’t like something on moral grounds, they should just not participate in that activity, but should tolerate the activity if others wish to participate in it.

Let's apply this norm to some other activities:

- If you don't like bank robbery, don't rob banks (just tolerate it if others want to rob banks).
- If you don't like car theft, don't steal cars (just tolerate it if others want to steal cars).
- If you don't like husbands abusing their wives, don't abuse yours (just tolerate wife abusers).
- If you don't like child molestation, don't molest children (just tolerate child molesters).

Obviously, this approach to moral behavior ignores the fact that when someone's rights are being violated, we not only have a right but an obligation to speak out to defend our fellow human beings' rights (and lives).

Note that the pro-abortionists' "just don't participate" norm is selective. Although pro-lifers do not want their tax and insurance dollars used to pay for abortions, pro-choicers want to pass laws to force us to do so. Although pro-life doctors and pharmacists do not wish to provide abortions or abortifacients, pro-choicers want to force them to do so on request, or at least have them refer to doctors or pharmacists who will.

Hence, pro-choicers state that we should tolerate their pro-abortion behavior, but do not want to tolerate our pro-life behavior. All human beings should be free to right wrongs in our society, and none of us should be coerced to participate in evil.

The Hard Case Argument

"What about the case of the young teenager impregnated by her father, who is carrying a Down Syndrome child, whom she cannot afford to raise? I wouldn't want to tell her she couldn't have an abortion."

First of all, we must realize that since we are human, we will never develop a social policy which works perfectly. Someone will always be caught in the gears of any policy we develop. Our task, then, is to develop the policy that harms the fewest human beings.

We can't tolerate the abortion policy flowing from *Roe v. Wade* and its companion case, *Doe v. Bolton*, that permits abortion for virtually any reason throughout the nine months of pregnancy. Figures from the Alan Guttmacher Institute (Planned Parenthood's research arm) show that between 1973 and 2008, the average **daily** number of abortions in the U.S. over this 36 year period was **3,774**. Two surveys of women having abortions suggest that less than ten percent would qualify as "hard cases." We don't need our current extreme policy to respond to these hard cases. Let's get rid of *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*, and return abortion policy-making to the states, so that our state legislatures can come up with a policy that harms fewer unborn children and their mothers.

The hard case argument can be applied to virtually any law. What about the case of the woman abused by her husband over 20 years? Should we allow her the "freedom to choose" to kill him? What about the father who is the sole support of his family who has lost his last two jobs due to plant closings, and now cannot afford to pay his rent or feed his children? Should we allow him the "freedom to choose" to rob a bank? We don't allow people to choose decisions that are harmful to themselves and others, decisions that violate others' rights. Abortion is no different. We should not allow it because it harms the woman, kills her child, and violates the child's right to life.