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Protect the Choice

Imagine this, you are in your junior year of highschool in the middle of a term and you aren't feeling well. You are very nauseous and your period is late. You get a pregnancy test from the local pharmacy and it confirms your fear. You are pregnant. You do not wish to continue the pregnancy because of school, and if your father found out he would kick you out of the house, not allowing you to finish your education. However abortion is illegal in the state that you live in but your friend tells you about a guy who can perform one at high cost. So you take all of your savings for school and you go to him. He performs the abortion in an abandoned warehouse, with unsanitary conditions and tools. The pregnancy is terminated but you get an infection that results in death. This wouldn't have happened if you were able to get an abortion at an actual hospital or clinic that had the expertise to perform one safely. Abortion has been around for hundreds of years, it has also been debated for many years with the groundbreaking Supreme Court ruling of Roe v. Wade making abortion legal in the US. Currently there are many restrictions on if a woman can get an abortion making it very difficult to get one. In some states it is being pushed to be illegal. However abortion needs to stay an option for unwanted pregnancies because pregnancy and childbirth is very dangerous, there are rights any body should have, and people against abortion tend ignore children after birth.

Abortion needs to be legal in the United States because pregnancy and childbirth is very dangerous. According to the CDC "the maternal mortality rate for 2019 (20.1 deaths per 100,000 live births) was significantly higher than the rate for 2018 (17.4)" (Hoyert). It is a very risky thing with many factors not being thought of within an individual's life. On top of common

health risks such as Hyperemesis Gravidarum, Gestational Diabetes, Placenta Previa, and Preeclampsia there are personal details that differ for each woman. Pregnancy-associated homicides made up 8.4% of reported maternal mortality deaths from all causes, with a rate of 1.7 per 100,000 live births. African American women have approximately seven times the risk of homicide as white women, and women age 19 or younger were at higher risk than those aged 30 or older. A more recent study estimated homicide rates among pregnant or postpartum women from death certificates in 37 states with enhanced pregnancy mortality surveillance. The pregnancy-associated homicide rate was 2.2 to 6.2 per 100,000 live births, compared with 2.5 to 2.6 per 100,000 for nonpregnant and non postpartum women (Pregnancy-Associated Deaths from Homicide, Suicide, and Drug Overdose: Review of Research and the Intersection with Intimate Partner Violence). Meaning that there are other factors to account for besides the natural risks of pregnancy and childbirth, making it difficult to make a wide ranging decision for all women when there are so many other parts at play. In countries that abortion is illegal, abortions that were botched, make up 8 to 11 percent (about 30,000) maternal deaths. The Netherlands have some of the lowest abortion rates in the world with 8.6 per 1,000 from the ages of 15-45, with the Termination of Pregnancy Act, which allows abortions up 24 weeks (when the child could survive outside of the mothers womb). There is no record for the amount of unsafe and illegal abortions because they are not done. This is due to the safe procedures that are easily accessible and because of comprehensive sexual education and the accessibility of contraceptives. This shows that just because abortion is legal doesn't mean that the abortion rates are high, when it is paired with the right tools. There are many different personal factors that are overlooked when talking about why a woman may get an abortion. Factors that only the individual can fully consider, when thinking about her health and her choice with her body.

Abortion is a choice that a woman has the right to make about her body because of the rights anyone should have. When donating an organ there is a process to go through, but to even

start the process you need the donors permission to even have the organ. If the donor is dead the hospital stills needs to have permission from the person in some form, according to the Revised Uniform Anatomical Gift Act adopted by all 50 states in 2006 it says "First Person Authorization" (FPA) to consent to organ donation after death via a signed donor card or driver's license, or by enrollment in a donor registry" (When the living and the deceased don't agree on organ donation). Even when the person is dead they still had to have been given express permission to donate their organs, to give them to someone else, to let someone else control/own them. And even when dead the individual's family does not have ownership of the body, they can make some decisions about what they think the deceased would want but they can't just do whatever they pleased. There are many different organs in the body and that includes the uterus. And when forced to keep a pregnancy, it takes away the control and ownership from the woman. Why should the deceased have more control over what happens to their body than the living? Because that's what it is about, control. Fertility clinics destroy healthy embryos all the time, whether it's because they are unviable or they are no longer needed for research. So why are people not upset about those being discarded? One could say it's less about the unborn child and more about the woman's life. In Texas there is a law encouraging individuals to sue a person if they know they got an abortion and to also sue doctors and places that perform abortions. That invades the person's medical privacy which is protected by Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) which created national standards that protects a patient's health information from being disclosed without their consent. Having individuals who have an abortion being sued because of the choice they made takes away the control they might have had and should have by being a person. Women are living breathing humans that should have the right to make choices about what happens to their body and shouldn't be forced into something.

While the woman's health is important in this, something else to consider is that people who are against abortion tend to not think about what happens to the child after it is born, as long

as it is born. The 2019 AFCARS Report says that there were 423,997 kids in the US foster system. According to Foster America “the system is very overwhelmed and being in it can be very traumatic”(Foster America). It has also been shown that the rate of kids going into foster care is 1 in 17, and then increases to 1 in 9 for African American children, and 1 in 7 for Native American children. It has been shown that kids in the foster system don’t have the same chances as a child not placed in foster care. “**50%** of foster youth will not graduate from high school on time, **48%** of girls in foster care become pregnant by age 19, **60%** of child trafficking victims have histories in foster care, **33%** of homeless young adults were previously in foster care, Kids in foster care are **4x** more likely than other children to attempt suicide” (Foster America). Showing that foster care isn’t the best place to be and then there are plenty of other kids outside of the system struggling with their lives. In the US 17 million children are struggling with being fed, and 2.5 million kids are homeless. Children need to get the support they need to be successful, which is difficult in a system that is simply overwhelmed.

A common argument against abortion is that the unborn child is a human life. There is a lot of debate on when a person’s life begins, whether it is at conception or when the heart first starts beating. If it is when the heart starts beating that means when the heart stops beating means death. However if a person's heart does stop beating, doctors can still resseateate it by extreme measures. However they may not do this if the individual has specified that they do not want these measures taken or if their brain has had significant damage done to it that is irreversible. If they were put on life support the family could make the decision for the hospital to take them off of the assistance on the fact that they are brain dead. If this thought process of a person is dead when their brain is no longer functioning and then applying it to when a human life begins there would be a significant difference in time between when the heart starts beating and when there is brain activity. The human heartbeat can be found 3-4 weeks after conception or about 5-6 weeks since the start of the women’s last period. However more complex brain structures do not begin

to develop until about weeks 12 and 16. But this isn't when consciousness would appear "the co-ordinated brain activity required for consciousness does not occur until 24-25 weeks of pregnancy. We cannot say when consciousness first emerges, but it cannot rationally be called before the end of the second trimester at 24 weeks of pregnancy" (Ryan). Since consciousness is such a fundamental part of being alive this would mean that the unborn child is not living until after the second trimester. There is a scenario that is going around the internet and it goes "I'm standing in front of you holding a baby in one hand and a petri dish with a blastocyst in the other. I'm going to drop them both off the side of the building and you can only catch one. Which do you catch?" (Hesse). This scenario is supposed to be impossible to decide, so impossible that to decide which one to save a coin would have to be flipped. Most people would say they would save the baby and not the petri dish. But why? When the thought process is that both are human lives that need to be protected. With saving the baby the person is acknowledging that the baby is alive and the blastocyst is not, or at least not on the same level as the baby. The definition of a human life is a very abstract concept that it is difficult to pinpoint when one becomes alive, and it overlooks many things.

Abortion needs to be legal in all 50 states because pregnancy and childbirth is very dangerous, there are rights any person should have to their body, and children tend to be unthought of after their birth. Each woman's experience and personal life is different and unique, and people have the right to choose what will happen to them and their organs in certain situations. There are so many children that need support already living that are not getting the help they need to thrive. So let's look at the scenario again, you find out you are pregnant as a teenager and instead of having to go to an unsafe and untrustworthy place to get an abortion, you are able to go to the abortion clinic in your town and have a abortion performed safely and efficiently, making sure you are safe. So that you are then able to continue school. Thriving and

bettering yourself so that maybe one day if you choose to, you can bring a child into a world where you can support them and they can thrive.

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