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A PROLIFER'S GUIDE TO TALKING ABOUT ABORTION WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE IN FAVOR OF LEGAL ABORTION

In order for pro-lifers to change hearts and minds on the abortion issue they must engage those in favor of legal abortion in civil discussions and compel the pro-abortion side to explain and justify their beliefs. Those in favor of legal abortion must prove the unborn either aren't alive, aren't human beings, or prove even though the unborn are living human beings they aren't deserving of protection for some principle reason. Continuously spouting empty words like "choice," "reproductive freedom," and "fundamental rights" are not reasoned arguments. Pro-lifers need to push past this rhetoric and challenge the opposition to intelligent, thoughtful discussions.

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**If they say...**

## Why are you against a woman's right to choose?

**You say...**

A woman's right to choose what? Ask them to finish their sentence. This will hopefully move the conversation away from the empty rhetoric of "choice." Most everyone is for a woman's right to choose many things - where to work, where to go to school, whom to marry, etc. However, no one should be in favor of the "choice" of abortion because the sole intent of abortion is the death of an innocent human being. Women can't legally choose to have their born children killed so why should it be legal for women to have the choice to have their unborn children killed?

Also, most women don't really "choose" to have abortions. Paying \$300 to \$800 or more to have someone they've never met before end the life of their unborn child is not something women freely choose to do. Most women have abortions because they feel they don't have the financial and familial resources to raise a child and feel they have no other options. When those in favor of abortion continually focus and rely on the word "choice," they make a woman's decision to have an abortion sound almost cavalier, like women want to have abortions in the same way others choose to have chocolate ice cream instead of vanilla. This is horribly misleading and totally ignores the real problems women in unplanned pregnancies face.

Prolife organizations and people want to offer real solutions to women in unplanned pregnancies.

If they say...

## **Women should be allowed to control their own bodies and make their own choices about their reproductive lives.**

You say...

This argument fails to recognize scientific reality—a pregnant woman has already reproduced and the child growing inside of her is not part of her body but a completely different human being with a different body and distinct genetic code. From conception a new and unique human being is present.

The word “conceive” is a synonym for the word “produce.” Just because an unborn child is temporarily living inside the womb of his mother and is dependent on her for sustenance doesn’t mean he is part of his mother’s body or that he can be killed because he’s defenseless and in the way.

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If they say...

## **Men can't have an opinion about abortion because they can't get pregnant**

You say...

Every abortion involves the participation of a man somehow. About half of abortions are performed on male children. Men’s participation in the issue can range from coercing women into having abortions, to men experiencing post-abortive trauma when their child’s life is taken against their will. Even if men weren’t involved in every abortion, for example, would we say men can’t get involved in advocating for a cure to uterine cancer because they can never experience it?

Abortion is an issue of human rights; is there any human rights issue where only one group of people is allowed to express their desire for protecting rights? If you believe every human being has value and deserves legal protection, you have a moral obligation to speak out in favor of that, no matter who you are.

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If they say...

## **No one knows when life begins.**

You say...

If no one knew when a distinct human being comes into existence or if the unborn are alive, wouldn’t that actually be a good reason to make abortion illegal? Because if we’re not sure if the unborn are living human beings, then don’t women having abortions take the risk of possibly signing the death sentence of a living human being?

Before buildings are imploded, those destroying the building make sure there are no humans inside or in the near vicinity. A person who claims it’s okay to have an abortion because no one knows when life begins is like a structural engineer thinking it’s okay to implode a building before making sure no one is in it. If we’re not sure the unborn are alive, then we shouldn’t destroy them until we’re 100% positive they’re not. This is why in the first few days after September 11, workers clearing the wreckage of the World Trade Center used their hands and buckets and not bulldozers because there was the possibility there could be living human beings underneath.

However, the above argument may be set aside because people who take the time to find out when human life begins will find a ready answer in the scientific field of embryology. Major embryology textbooks and any scientist

with the slightest knowledge of prenatal development will testify to the scientific fact that when sperm and egg combine at conception the life of a distinct human being has begun.

How can something be growing and developing and not be alive? What other things grow, develop, mature and are not alive?

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If they say...

**I personally oppose abortion, would never personally have an abortion and will work to lessen the number of abortions, but I think abortion should stay legal.**

You say...

Why are you personally opposed to abortion? Why would you never have an abortion? Why do you want there to be less abortions?

The only reason to be personally opposed to abortion is because abortion intentionally takes the life of an innocent human being. So they're basically saying they think abortion kills children but they think killing children should remain legal. Simply pointing out this view and asking them to explain it will force them to re-examine their logically inconsistent position.

If abortion doesn't take the life of an innocent human being then why should there be less abortions?

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If they say...

**A fetus may be a human being, but it's not a person.**

You say...

What's the difference between a human being and a human person? Are there other human beings that aren't human persons?

Many people who say the unborn aren't persons will have no response to these questions or they'll have to think for awhile. This means they haven't really thought about what they just said. They're saying the unborn don't deserve to be protected because they're not persons but they don't even know what they consider a person to be. This most likely means they're just repeating something they've heard over and over again but haven't really thought about.

Any qualifications that disqualify unborn children from the arbitrary realm of personhood, such as self-awareness, consciousness, ability to survive on their own, etc. will also disqualify other human beings like infants, people in reversible comas, those on respirators, etc. These qualifications will also be wholly arbitrary and have no basis in fact. Why should these qualifications be accepted instead of other arbitrary qualifications like height, weight, IQ, skin color, and gender?

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If they say...

**A fetus is only a potential human being.**

**You say...**

An unborn child isn't a potential human being but a human being with a great deal of potential. If an unborn child isn't a human being now, what is it? A fish? A dog? Anything that is potentially something in the future has to be an actual something now. It's a scientific fact that human parents can only produce human offspring. At what time does an unborn child become an actual human being? Why does this stage of development make the unborn an actual human being as opposed to any other stage of development?

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**If they say...**

**How can you think that a one-celled zygote, smaller than the dot on the letter "i," is the moral equivalent of a fully-grown woman?**

**You say...**

I believe in an inclusive view of humanity which says all human beings are created equal and deserve the same respect and protection. Human beings deserve to be protected regardless of their size or of the number of cells that make up their bodies. Fully grown adults don't deserve more respect and protection than newborn children simply because they have more cells or have greater mass. This argument is based on the notion that size and ability are what make humans valuable. The value of human life isn't based on our size or what we can or cannot do, but rather based on the notion that human beings have intrinsic worth, meaning humans are valuable because of what we are - humans - and not on what we are currently capable of doing. The life of every human should be respected and protected regardless of size and ability.

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**If they say...**

**Don't we decide that people are dead by their lack of brain function? How can a zygote be alive if it doesn't have anything that resembles a brain?**

**You say...**

There is a difference between not yet and never again. Mature human beings who lack a functioning brain are considered dead because at that stage of development they need a functioning brain to direct their development and to fully integrate their bodies. An early stage embryo, however, does not need a functioning brain to direct its development and integrate itself. An embryo doesn't need a brain to live while more mature humans cannot live without a brain.

We all recognize that other organisms that don't have brains are alive. Are plants and fungi not alive because they don't have brains?

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**If they say...**

**If our country makes abortion illegal thousands of women will be killed in brutal back-alley abortions.**

**You say...**

First, even if thousands of women died from illegal abortions that doesn't mean abortion should be legal. This argument only works if abortion doesn't kill a human being or else we should make armed robbery and murder legal because robbers and murderers are often killed while committing their crimes or trying to escape. The possibility that women may die from doing something illegal doesn't mean it should be made legal.

Second, statistics on women dying from illegal abortions disseminated by pro-abortion activists are often outright lies. According to the Centers for Disease Control, in 1972, the year before abortion was made legal throughout the country, 39 women died from illegal abortions while 24 women died from legal abortions.

In a 1960 American Journal of Health article, Planned Parenthood's then-medical director, Mary Calderone, concluded that "90% of all illegal abortions are presently done by physicians." So it seems the large majority of the "back-alley butchers" on January 21, 1973, magically became "caring doctors who believe in a woman's right to choose" on January 22, 1973. January 22, 1973, is the date when the U.S. Supreme Court handed down the Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton decisions making abortion legal in every state through all nine months of pregnancy.

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If they say...

**Statistics show that abortion is safer than carrying a child to term. Why should women be forced to risk their lives and health if they don't want to?**

You say...

If a study came out which showed women without children were less likely to die from heart disease than women with children, would women with children be justified in killing their kids simply because their lives would be a little safer? This is another argument in favor of abortion that only works if the unborn aren't human beings.

It should be pointed out that deaths from abortion are commonly under reported or reported under different causes like "ruptured uterus" or "punctured cervix" while deaths from pregnancy are often recorded for the whole nine months of pregnancy, including deaths that might have nothing to do with the pregnancy, like a car accident. In Michigan, a girl named Tamia Russell died in January 2004 from complications after a second-trimester abortion. Even though Tamia's death received a fair amount of media coverage, the Michigan Department of Community Health lists no deaths from abortion in its report on Michigan abortions in 2004.

Abortion advocates like Planned Parenthood claim abortion is a safe procedure and have even claimed it is 11 times safer than carrying a pregnancy to term. Even if we accept these statistics they don't prove very much. One statistic Planned Parenthood uses is the death rate for abortion is 0.6 per 100,000 procedures. If carrying a pregnancy to term is 11 times more dangerous than abortion that means the death rate for pregnancy is approximately 6.6 deaths per 100,000 pregnancies. Which means if a woman has an abortion, she has a 99.9994% chance of surviving while if a woman carries her pregnancy to term she has a 99.9934% chance of surviving. The difference between these numbers, 0.006%, is not statistically significant, meaning there is no real difference between the two numbers, especially when you consider the variety of variables that affect both abortion and childbirth.

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If they say....

**But certainly you would allow an abortion for women who have been raped or are victims of incest?**

**You say....**

Rape victims deserve our compassion and support. Innocent unborn children who are conceived in rape deserve protection, not discrimination. Someone should not lose their right to life based on how they were conceived. An abortion doesn't undo the horrible pain caused by a sexual assault, it ends the life of a defenseless human being. The innocent child shouldn't have to pay for her father's crime. It is the attacker, not the woman or her innocent unborn child, who deserves to be punished.

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