

Personhood

The inalienable right to life possessed by every human being is present from the moment of initial formation, and all human beings shall be entitled to the equal protection of persons under the law.



THE PERSONHOOD INITIATIVE

Saving Lives Ten Thousand At a Time

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What is Personhood?

For nearly 40 years, the Christian community has been seeking for a way to eliminate the practice of abortion in America. We have presented and supported pro-life legislation. We have challenged abortion laws in the courts. We have established crisis pregnancy centers across America, and we have held rallies on government lawns and picketed abortion clinics. In spite of these efforts, we are still witnessing 1.2 million abortions per year in America and more than 10,000 per year in Alabama. We have seen a few successes, but the reality of the situation is that we have failed to have any significant effect on the number of abortions being performed. We need a new battle plan – a plan that abandons the shortcomings of our previous attempts and corrects them to engage the enemy at its weakest point.

Abortion has an Achilles heel, and that is where we must direct our attack. In *Roe v. Wade*, Justice Potter Stewart asked the pro-abortion attorney Sarah Weddington this question: “If it were established that an unborn fetus is a person within the protection of the Fourteenth Amendment, you would have an almost impossible case here would you not?” Mrs. Weddington replied, “I would have a very difficult case.” Justice Blachmun then concluded in the majority decision that, “If this suggestion of personhood is established, the appellant’s case, of course, collapses, for the fetus’ right to life would then be guaranteed by the 14th Amendment.”

Here, in *Roe v. Wade* itself, is laid bare for us a weakness in the foundation of the legal case for abortion. If the unborn child were to be legally defined as a person, then abortion would become a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. This is where we must focus our attack. Abortion has an Achilles heel, and it is personhood for the unborn.

The Personhood Initiative is a grass roots movement that seeks to exploit this weakness by adding an amendment to the Constitution of Alabama which will define all unborn children as persons under the protection of the Fourteenth Amendment. Our motto and the text of the amendment that we are recommending to the legislature is:

“The inalienable right to life possessed by every human being is present from the moment of initial formation, and all human beings shall be entitled to the equal protection of persons under the law.”

Our two-fold goal is 1) to generate such public awareness of the personhood amendment that no one in the state of Alabama will be able to discuss the issue of abortion without also discussing the language of the proposed amendment, and 2) to create an environment in which the legislators feel compelled to give the personhood amendment their full support.

We ask you to join us in this battle that you may have a part in the victory to come. Visit our website, www.personhoodinitiative.com, in order to learn more about how you can get involved; then begin spreading the word and encouraging others to join the fray. Let us press on against the foe knowing that if God be for us then not even the mighty stronghold of abortion can stand against us.



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Personhood in the Bible

I. The child is a person in the womb - Job 10:18

“Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me!” (Job 10:18)

Job wished that he had “given up the ghost” or died while he was still in the womb, but one cannot die in the womb unless he is already alive while still in the womb. The same sentiment was expressed by Jeremiah.

“Because he slew me not from the womb; or that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb to be always great with me.” (Jeremiah 20:17)

Once again we note that one cannot be slain unless he is already alive, and by that observation, we must conclude that the unborn child is a living human being. This understanding is further reinforced by the biblical description of a miscarriage.

“Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb.” (Numbers 12:12)

The use of the personal pronoun to refer to the unborn child in this passage clearly indicates that the unborn child is a person. This conclusion is made even stronger by the change in gender from the feminine gender at the beginning of the verse in which Aaron is referring to his sister to the masculine gender when Aaron is referring to an unnamed person who had died in a miscarriage. If the unborn child were not a person, then the pronoun should have changed from the feminine to the neuter form of “it” in the latter part of the verse.

II. The child is a person from conception – Judges 13:4-5

“Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing: For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.” (Judges 13:4-5)

Samson’s mother was told that her son would be a Nazarite from the womb. Nazarites were forbidden from drinking wine. The mother would not have had to give up wine from conception unless the child was a person from conception. A similar statement was made about the prophet Jeremiah.

“Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.” (Jeremiah 1:5)

God said that He knew the prophet before he was formed in the belly. The only stage of life prior to the period of formation in the womb is that of conception. Another reference to the personhood of children in this stage of development is found in the book of Hosea.

“As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird, from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception. Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there shall not be a man left: yea, woe also to them when I depart from them!” (Hosea 9:11-12)

According to Deuteronomy 33:17, the glory of Ephraim was their children. In this passage God declared that He would cause their glory— their children – to die at four different stages of life: childhood, birth, the womb, and conception. That conception is listed on an equal plane with other stages of life gives clear indication that the personhood of the child begins at this stage.

III. We have a responsibility to defend unborn children – Psalm 82:3

“Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.” (Psalm 82:3)

Modern America’s answer to the problem of fatherless children is abortion. In doing this, “they ... murder the fatherless. Yet they say, The LORD shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.” (Psalm 94:6-7) But God says that He is “the helper of the fatherless,” and that “He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless.” (Psalm 10:14; Deuteronomy 10:18) The prophet Isaiah records God’s condemnation of Israel for failing to defend the fatherless.

“Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them. Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies: And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin.” (Isaiah 1:23-25)

The princes of Israel were not the children of the kings. They were the representative leaders from each of the tribes, (Numbers 1:1-16) and God called those representatives His enemies because they did not defend the fatherless. Are we willing to be the enemies of God? Are we willing to risk having Him turn His hand against us? Let us take up the cause for it is just and not despair over our numbers (“for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few,” - I Samuel 14:6), but let us do that which we know to be good. (James 4:17)



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Personhood in the Law

I. The child is a person from fertilization – The Code of Alabama

“(3) PERSON. The term, when referring to the victim of a criminal homicide or assault, means a human being, including an unborn child in utero at any stage of development, regardless of viability...”

“(d) Nothing in Article 1 or Article 2 shall permit the prosecution of (1) any person for conduct relating to an abortion for which the consent of the pregnant woman or a person authorized by law to act on her behalf has been obtained or for which consent is implied by law or (2) any woman with respect to her unborn child.

“(e) Nothing in this section shall make it a crime to perform or obtain an abortion that is otherwise legal.” (Code of Alabama § 13A-6-1)

The Code of Alabama states without exception that the unborn child is a person from the moment that he begins to develop. The fact that the Code of Alabama contains an exception to the definition of murder which allows abortions to be performed instead of a limitation on the definition of a person indicates that the child is still legally a person even when his life is being intentionally ended through abortion.

II. The unborn child cannot be put to death for the crimes of another person – The Code of Alabama

“If there is reason to believe that a female convict is pregnant, the sheriff must, with the concurrence of a judge of the circuit court, summon a jury of six disinterested persons, as many of whom must be physicians as practicable ... If such jury is of opinion, and so find, that the convict is with child, the sheriff or officer acting in his place must suspend the execution of the sentence.” (Code of Alabama § 15-18-86)

The state of Alabama, along with every other state in America, forbids the execution of a woman who is pregnant regardless of the stage of development of the child. Such a stay of execution is only reasonable if the child is considered a person under the protection of the law, for then it would be unlawful to take the life of the child without a separate trial before a jury of his peers. If the unborn child were just a part of the mother’s body and not a separate individual, then a stay of execution for the reason of pregnancy would be wholly unnecessary.

III. No person can be denied protection from murder – The Constitution of Alabama

“...and he shall not be compelled to give evidence against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, except by due process of law;” (Constitution of Alabama – Section 6)

“That all courts shall be open; and that every person, for any injury done him, in his lands, goods, person, or reputation, shall have a remedy by due process of law; and right and justice shall be administered without sale, denial, or delay.” (Constitution of Alabama – Section 13)

According to our own state’s constitution, it is unlawful to deprive a person of life without the due process of law and the opportunity to seek a remedy for injury by due process of law. Since our state code defines the unborn child as a person, the exception in the code which permits abortion is unconstitutional. It deprives a person of his life without a trial by jury in accordance with the due process of law and without the opportunity to seek a remedy for that injury.

IV. No person can be denied protection from murder – The Fourteenth Amendment

“...nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” (Constitution of the United States – Amendment XIV)

According to the Fourteenth Amendment, the state of Alabama does not have the right to deprive an unborn child of his life because we have defined that child as being a person and because he is not capable of being tried before a jury of his peers as required by the due process of law. Furthermore, it is unconstitutional for the state of Alabama to deny the unborn child the equal protection of the law by making his murder an exception to the states’ prohibition against murder. The state of Alabama is violating the Constitution of the United States, and we are complicit in that violation for as long as we do nothing to challenge it.



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Personhood in the Courts

I. The states have a duty to protect the inalienable right to life for all persons within their boundaries - United States v. Cruikshank

“The rights of life and personal liberty are natural rights of man. ‘To secure these rights,’ says the Declaration of Independence, ‘governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.’ The very highest duty of the States, when they entered into the Union under the Constitution, was to protect all persons within their boundaries in the enjoyment of these ‘unalienable rights with which they were endowed by their Creator.’ Sovereignty, for this purpose, rests alone with the States.” (United States v. Cruikshank, 92 U.S. 542, 553 (1875))

Every person’s right to life must be protected by the state regardless of that person’s age, level of dependency, citizenship or even viability. The right to life is stated to be a natural right which is granted by the Creator, and which is therefore unable to be alienated by the laws of the state. The fact that this right is to be protected for all persons within the boundaries of the state indicates that this protection is not to be denied to any person for any reason. It is therefore unlawful for a state to have a viability test to determine whether a person’s right to life is worthy of protection. Every person’s right to life is to be protected without exception.

II. The unborn child is stated to be a distinct living organism – Gonzales v. Carhart

“The Act does apply both previability and postviability because, by common understanding and scientific terminology, a fetus is a living organism while within the womb, whether or not it is viable outside the womb. We do not understand this point to be contested by the parties.” (Gonzales v. Carhart , 550 U.S. at 147 (2007) (citing Planned Parenthood, 320 F. Supp. 2d, at 971-72))

In Gonzales v. Carhart, the Supreme Court recognized that the unborn child is a living individual separate and distinct from his mother. In this decision, the Court did not consider the unborn child to be merely a part of the mother’s body.

III. The unborn child is stated to be a human being from the moment of conception – Bonbrest v. Kotz

“From the viewpoint of the civil law and the law of property, a child *en ventre sa mere* is not only regarded as human being, but as such from the moment of conception—which it is in fact.” (Bonbrest v. Kotz, 65 F. Supp. 138, 140 (1946))

IV. The unborn child is viable from the moment of conception – Wagner v. Finch

“Medically speaking, Donna was viable from the instant of conception onward. An action for damages could have been brought in her behalf for injuries she might have received prior to birth.” (Wagner v. Finch, 413 F.2d 267 (5th Cir. 1969))

V. The unborn child has a right to the protection of the law – Marbury v. Madison

“The very essence of civil liberty certainly consists in the right of every individual to claim the protection of the laws, whenever he receives an injury. . . . The government of the United States has been emphatically termed a government of laws, and not of men. It will certainly cease to deserve this high appellation, if the laws furnish no remedy for the violation of a vested legal right.” (Marbury v. Madison, 5 U.S. (1 Cranch) 163 (1803))

According to the Supreme Court decision in Marbury v. Madison, the individuality of the unborn child guarantees him a civil right to claim the protection of the law.

VI. All unborn children must be treated equally under the law – Reed v. Reed

“The Equal Protection Clause of that amendment does, however, deny to States the power to legislate that different treatment be accorded to persons placed by a statute into different classes on the basis of criteria wholly unrelated to the objective of that statute. A classification must be reasonable, not arbitrary, and must rest upon some ground of difference having a fair and substantial relation to the object of the legislation, so that all persons similarly circumstanced shall be treated alike.” (Reed v. Reed, 404 U.S. 75-76 (1971))

The state of Alabama does not have the authority to deny the protection of the law to a single class of unborn children. The current law in Alabama grants the full protection of the law to all children except those that are aborted. According to the decision in Reed v. Reed, this exception is a violation of the 14th amendment of the Constitution of the United States.



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Personhood in Science

I. The child is an individual human life from the moment of conception – Dr. Beck

“The foetus, previous to the time of quickening, must be either dead or alive. ... Foetuses do actually die in the uterus before quickening, and then all the signs of death are present. The embryo, therefore, before that crisis, must be in a state different from that of death, and this can be no other than life. ... [T]he fact is certain, that the foetus enjoys life long before the sensation of quickening is felt by the mother. Indeed, no other doctrine appears to be consonant with reason or physiology, but that which admits the embryo to possess vitality from the very moment of conception.” (Theodric Romeyn Beck M.D., *Elements of Medical Jurisprudence* (1825), 138-140)

Contrary to the claims of those favoring abortion, the medical community has recognized the individual life of the unborn child for many centuries, and Dr. Beck demonstrated a century and a half before *Roe v. Wade* that the unborn child is a separate human life from the moment of conception.

II. The unborn child is not part of his mother’s body – Dr. Storer

"Allowing, then, as must be done, that the ovum does not originate in the uterus; that for a time, however slight, during its passage through the Fallopian tube, its connection with the mother is wholly broken; that its subsequent history after impregnation is one merely of development, its attachment merely for nutrition and shelter - it is not rational to suppose that its total independence, thus once established, becomes again merged into total identity, however temporary." (Horatio R. Storer M.D., LL.B., *Criminal Abortion* (1868))

The logic of Dr. Storer’s conclusion cannot be denied. The unborn child begins his life independent of the mother’s body. It is therefore irrational to conclude that the independent life of the unborn child ceases to exist during the time that he is in the womb. This fact is even further strengthened by the practice of *in vitro* fertilization in which a living human child is inserted into the womb for the purpose of development rather than for the purpose of obtaining life.

III. The child, not the mother, initiates implantation – Dr. Schauf

"Dr. F Hitschmann and Dr. O Th. Lindenthal give the results of their exhaustive investigations relating to placental development and growth. The impregnated ovum reaches the uterine cavity devoid of villi, and after it has abraded the epithelium and reached the mucosa it is enveloped by a particular kind of tissue of the trophoblast or ectoblast which is in direct communication with the maternal tissue. ... It is the trophoblast which possesses the power to open up vessels and to grow actively through the decidua. ... It is, therefore, the trophoblast which establishes the first communication between the maternal tissues and the ovum, and which prepares the way for the growth of the villi into the maternal structure." (Adam Schauf, M.D., "The Growth of the Placenta," *American Gynecology* (1903), 94)

The independent life of the unborn child is even further proven by the fact that it is the child who initiates implantation into the womb. The mother's body is entirely passive in the implantation process. It merely responds to the actions taken by the unborn child.

IV. The child will implant outside of the uterus if necessary – Drs. Godyn, Hazra and Gulli

"The gestation age was approximately 37 weeks in a 26-year-old mother. After a normally developed live 3255-g male infant, with a crown-heel length of 51 cm, was delivered by modified cesarean section from an abdominal extrauterine location; ... Despite lack of the specialized uterine environment for sustaining such a pregnancy, a successful outcome of the extrauterine abdominal pregnancy was observed in this case." (Janusz J. Godyn MD, Anup Hazra MD, Vito M. Gulli MD, "Subperitoneal placenta accreta succenturiate in the case of a successful near-term extrauterine abdominal pregnancy," *Human Pathology* (2005) 36, 922– 926)

The successful implantation and live birth of children who developed outside their mother's womb fully solidifies their claim to independent life. If pregnancy were merely a function of the woman's body, then the implantation, development and live birth of the child would not be able to occur outside of the womb. That this does happen indicates that the unborn child is an independent, living human being who will fight to maintain his life in spite of great obstacles. The intentional taking of that life cannot be described as anything else but murder.



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Personhood Q&A

1. If the unborn child is a living person under the law, then would an expectant mother be charged with manslaughter if she falls down the stairs and suffers a miscarriage?

According to the Code of Alabama section 13A-6-3, "a person commits manslaughter if he recklessly causes the death of another person." The key word is "recklessly." Before a mother can be sentenced for manslaughter, the state must be able to prove that it was her recklessness that caused the death of the unborn child. The point to keep in mind is that the charge of manslaughter would apply equally to a mother whose conduct causes the death of her two-week-old child as it would to one who causes the death of her unborn child. In either case, the accused is assumed innocent until proven guilty before a jury of her peers.

What if a pregnant woman is walking down the street when a young man who is texting while driving swerves off the road and hits her hard enough to kill her baby – should the young man be charged with manslaughter? Yes, because according to Alabama law his reckless conduct caused the death of another person. If the charge of manslaughter can be brought against the young man in this scenario, then it can also be brought against a pregnant woman who causes the death of her own child in a case of equivalent recklessness.

This application of the charge of manslaughter to those who cause the death of an unborn child through reckless conduct, however, is not something that would come about as the result of a personhood amendment. It is what the law currently states.

2. If the unborn child were a person according to the law, would that make in vitro fertilization illegal?

A personhood amendment would make the intentional killing of embryos an act of murder, but there is some very good news for those who are in need of in vitro fertilization. There actually is a way to complete the in vitro fertilization process without causing the death of the unused embryos. It's called oocyte cryopreservation or egg freezing.

According to an article by the Medical Journal of Australia, sperm cryopreservation has been in use since 1953 and oocyte cryopreservation since 1984 which was just one year after the first successful embryo cryopreservation. Oocyte cryopreservation allows the couple to preserve unfertilized eggs that can be individually fertilized when pregnancy is desired, and the extra eggs can be discarded without killing an unwanted person.

[Keith L Harrison et al, "Oocyte cryopreservation as an adjunct to the assisted reproductive technologies," Medical Journal of Australia 2007; 186 (7): 379, accessed online at: http://www.mja.com.au/public/issues/186_07_020407/letters_020407_fm.pdf]

3. What effect would the Personhood Amendment have on birth control?

Unfortunately, there are several types of birth control that include an abortifacient as added insurance against pregnancy. The website [abort73.com](http://www.abort73.com) contains a list of birth control measures that do and several that do not include some form of an abortifacient. Those opposed to the Personhood Amendment will often argue that it would make birth control illegal, but in reality it would only cause some birth control methods to become illegal. There would still be a variety of options available for those who find birth control to be necessary.

[http://www.abort73.com/abortion_facts/which_birth_control_methods_cause_abortion]

4. Can the pro-life argument be made without relying on religious beliefs?

The argument that life begins at conception can certainly be made from science, and indeed that very argument has been made by medical doctors for centuries. (See the section "Personhood in Science" for examples.) However, the evidence from science is insufficient for the complete pro-life argument. Science can tell us that the unborn child is a living human being, but it cannot tell us if that child has an inalienable right to life. Our founding fathers recognized correctly that rights can only be inalienable if they come from God. Without Him, all rights are dependent upon the whims of society.

"The acknowledgment of the unalienable right of man to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, is at the same time an acknowledgment of the omnipotence, the omniscience, and the all-pervading goodness of God." - John Quincy Adams

[John Quincy Adams, An Oration Delivered Before the Cincinnati Astronomical Society, On the Occasion of Laying the Corner Stone of An Astronomical Observatory, On the 10th of November, 1843, at 12-15 (Cincinnati: Shepard & Co., 1843)]

5. Should personhood legislation include an exception which allows abortion in order to save the life of the mother?

A life of the mother exception to any abortion law would be a violation of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment because other classes of people are not given that same kind of exception. For example, there is no exception to the laws against murder which would allow a doctor to kill one member of a set of conjoined twins in order to save the life of the other. The doctor is legally required to attempt to save the lives of both twins until such a time as one of them dies in spite of his efforts, and then he is to continue to devote all of his energy to saving the surviving twin regardless of which one it is. The same application can be made to the unborn child and the mother. The goal of the law in such situations must always be to save both.



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6. Can an unborn child be a person before he is conscious or self-aware?

There are many people who are neither conscious nor self-aware who are still considered persons under the law. Examples include those in comas, those with Alzheimers and the mentally handicapped.

The actual definition of the word "person" according to Webster's New Riverside University Dictionary is first "a living human being" and second "the composite of characteristics that make up an individual personality." The word "personhood" is defined as "the condition of being a person, especially those qualities that confer distinct individuality."

The concepts of consciousness and self-awareness are noticeably absent from these definitions. The focus seems rather to be on humanity and individuality. When we view the unborn child in light of this focus, it becomes obvious that he is indeed a person.

7. Do laws against abortion really make abortions less safe?

If the unborn child is a person possessing the same inalienable rights as the mother, then those who claim that laws against abortion make the practice of abortion less safe are essentially claiming that laws against murder make murder less safe.

After all, it should be apparent to everyone that the illegality of murder has many unforeseen consequences for the one committing the murder. Not only does he have to be fearful of his victim fighting back, but he must also be constantly on guard against police officers and nosy neighbors. This fear of being caught can be directly linked to a number of dangerous outcomes for potential murderers since they must now perpetuate their crime in dark areas that are often unfamiliar to them and full of hazards. If we would just make murder legal, then these poor murderers could kill people during the day and in the comfort of a safe and friendly environment.

This logic could be applied to any kind of crime. It is always possible to argue that the crime could have been committed with less danger if it were not a crime, but that does not in any way justify the crime itself.

8. The men who oppose abortion will never experience the challenges of pregnancy, so what gives them the right to pass legislation on it?

Men have the same right to pass legislation on abortion as those who have no fear of theft have a right to pass legislation against thievery.

9. Does the right to privacy guarantee that a woman has the right to have an abortion?

The right to privacy is not a specified, constitutional right. It has, however, been introduced in the courts as an application of the fifth and fourteenth amendments, and as long as it is constrained within the bounds of those two amendments, it is perfectly acceptable.

Nevertheless, the right to privacy cannot be claimed by a murderer as justification for his release. The same applies to theft, rape, assault and any other crime that involves the violation of one person's rights by another. In the area of abortion, the right to privacy can only be invoked if one assumes that the unborn child is not a person. If, on the other hand, the unborn child is recognized as a living person, then the right to privacy can never be applied to the practice of abortion. Abortion would then involve the intentional killing of one person by another in an act of murder which can never be justified.

10. Do anti-abortion laws infringe upon the woman's "reproductive freedom"?

Reproductive freedom does not include the right to kill an unborn child any more than the freedom of the press grants permission for the news media to kill someone in order to write a story about it.

11. How can the unborn child be considered a separate person, if he cannot exist independent of his mother?

Fertilization does not take place in the womb. The new child has to travel from the Fallopian tubes into the uterus before implantation can occur. During this 7-10 day period, the child is his own independent life. In order to claim that the child is not a separate person in the womb, the pro-abortionist has to first explain how someone who exists as an independent person can lose that independent existence, become just a part of someone else, and then reclaim that independent existence at some later point.

This was the same point made by Dr. Horatio Storer in his book "Criminal Abortion:"

"Allowing, then, as must be done, that the ovum does not originate in the uterus; that for a time, however slight, during its passage through the Fallopian tube, its connection with the mother is wholly broken; that its subsequent history after impregnation is one merely of development, its attachment merely for nutrition and shelter, - it is not rational to suppose that its total independence, thus once established, becomes again merged into total identity, however temporary."

[Horatio R. Storer M.D., LL.B., Criminal Abortion (1868), pg. 10]



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12. Wouldn't the criminalization of abortion result in tens of thousands of women dying from unsafe "back-alley" abortions?

The National Right to Life website provides the following answer to this question:

"Another stunning admission about the manufacturing of illegal abortion numbers comes from Dr. Bernard Nathanson, former director of the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws (now known as the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League - - NARAL). In his classic 1979 book *Aborting America*, Dr. Nathanson wrote, 'How many deaths were we talking about when abortion was illegal? In NARAL, we generally emphasized the frame of the individual case, not the mass statistics, but when we spoke of the latter it was always 5,000 to 10,000 deaths a year. I confess that I knew that the figures were totally false and I suppose that others did too if they stopped to think of it. But in the 'morality' of our revolution, it was a useful figure, widely accepted, so why go out of our way to correct it with honest statistics? The overriding concern was to get the laws eliminated, and anything within reason that had to be done was permissible.'

A powerful debating point is to explain to your audience that for 1972, the year before Roe, the federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported 39 maternal deaths from illegal abortion. Those 39 mothers and their 39 children were very real tragedies that should have been prevented by providing support and care for the mother and her unborn child. The number 39 however is a far cry from those exaggerated figures of thousands, even tens of thousands, used by abortion advocates in their cause."

[Olivia Gans and Mary Spaulding Balch, J.D., "Argument 4: If abortion is made illegal, women will die," National Right to Life, <http://www.nrlc.org/abortion/facts/responseargument4.html>]

13. Is it better for society to have babies aborted than to have them be brought up poor and neglected with a high risk of becoming criminals?

There have been many great men throughout history who began their life under difficult circumstances and who credit those early difficulties with giving them the strength that they needed in order to achieve greatness. In spite of this, however, the argument is still invalid. A person's right to life is not determined by his circumstances. Our circumstances are constantly changing, and no one can predict what the future will hold. It is not unheard of for an affluent family to lose everything that they possess in a failed business deal. Would that family then be justified in killing their children just because they can no longer afford the same level of provision for them? Of course not, and neither can abortion be justified by the level of care that the mother is currently capable of providing.