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Millennials Far Less Aware of Historic Ruling

Roe v. Wade at 40: Most Oppose Overturning Abortion Decision

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Michael Dimock

Director, Pew Research Center for the People
& the Press

Luis Lugo

Director, Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life

Carroll Doherty, Alan Cooperman

Associate Directors

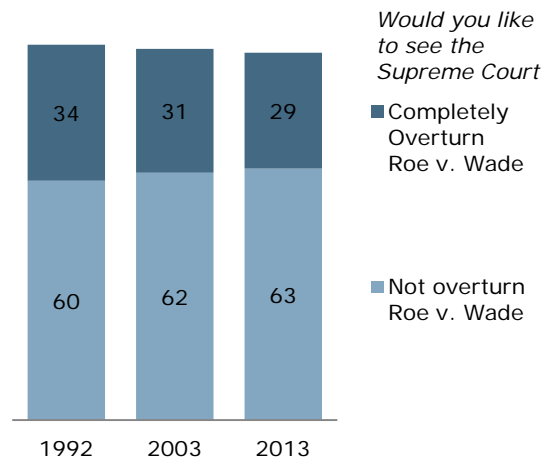
1615 L St, N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel (202) 419-4350
Fax (202) 419-4399
www.peoplepress.org

Millennials Far Less Aware of Historic Ruling *Roe v. Wade* at 40: Most Oppose Overturning Abortion Decision

As the 40th anniversary of the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision approaches, the public remains opposed to completely overturning the historic ruling on abortion. More than six-in-ten (63%) say they would not like to see the court completely overturn the *Roe v. Wade* decision, which established a woman's constitutional right to abortion at least in the first three months of pregnancy. Only about three-in-ten (29%) would like to see the ruling overturned. These opinions are little changed from surveys conducted 10 and 20 years ago.

Decades after the Supreme Court rendered its decision, on Jan. 22, 1973, most Americans (62%) know that *Roe v. Wade* dealt with abortion rather than school desegregation or some other issue. But the rest either guess incorrectly (17%) or do not know what the case was about (20%). And there are substantial age differences in awareness: Among those ages 50 to 64, 74% know that *Roe v. Wade* dealt with abortion, the highest percentage of any age group. Among those younger than 30, just 44% know this.

Consistent Support for Maintaining *Roe v. Wade* Over Past 20 Years



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan. 9-13, 2013. 1992 Figures based on registered voters.

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center, conducted Jan. 9-13 among 1,502 adults, finds that abortion is viewed as a less important issue than in the past. Currently, 53% say abortion “is not that important compared to other issues,” up from 48% in 2009 and 32% in 2006. The percentage viewing abortion as a “critical issue facing the country” fell from 28% in 2006 to 15% in 2009 and now stands at 18%.

However, the public continues to be divided over whether it is morally acceptable to have an abortion. Nearly half (47%) say it is morally wrong to have an abortion, while just 13% find this morally acceptable; 27% say this is not a moral issue and 9% volunteer that it depends on the situation. These opinions have changed little since 2006.

Wide Religious, Partisan Differences over *Roe*

There continue to be substantial religious and partisan differences over whether to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, and over the broader question of whether abortion should be legal or illegal on all or most cases. (*For more on attitudes toward abortion, see [this slideshow by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life.](#)*)

More Say Abortion Is “Not that Important”

	Mar 2006	Aug 2009	Jan 2013	Change 06-13
<i>Issue of abortion is ...</i>	%	%	%	
Critical issue	28	15	18	-10
One among many important issues	38	33	27	-11
Not that important compared to other issues	32	48	53	+21
Don't know/Refused	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	--
	100	100	100	

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan. 9-13, 2013. Q54. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

White evangelical Protestants are the only major religious group in which a majority (54%) favors completely overturning the *Roe v. Wade* decision. Large percentages of white mainline Protestants (76%), Black Protestants (65%) and white Catholics (63%) say the ruling should not be overturned. Fully 82% of the religiously unaffiliated oppose overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

Half of Americans who attend religious services at least weekly favor completely overturning the *Roe v. Wade* decision, compared with just 17% of those who attend less often.

Republicans are evenly divided over whether the ruling should be overturned: 46% say it should while 48% say it should not. By wide margins, Democrats (74% to 20%) and independents (64% to 28%) oppose overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

There is no gender gap in opinions about *Roe v. Wade*: Nearly identical percentages of women (64%) and men (63%) oppose reversing the decision.

Views of *Roe v. Wade*

Would you like to see the Supreme Court...

	Overturn decision %	Not overturn %	DK/Ref %
Total	29	63	7=100
Men	29	63	9=100
Women	30	64	6=100
18-29	27	68	5=100
30-49	31	61	8=100
50-64	26	69	6=100
65+	36	52	12=100
White	29	66	6=100
Black	29	67	4=100
College grad+	22	73	4=100
Post-graduate	13	82	5=100
College grad	27	69	4=100
Some college	27	67	6=100
HS or less	36	53	11=100
Republican	46	48	6=100
Democrat	20	74	6=100
Independent	28	64	8=100
Protestant	35	58	7=100
White evangelical	54	42	4=100
White mainline	17	76	7=100
Black Protestant	29	65	5=100
Catholic	38	55	7=100
White Catholic	33	63	4=100
Unaffiliated	9	82	9=100
<i>Attend religious services</i>			
Weekly or more	50	44	7=100
Less often	17	76	7=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan. 9-13, 2013. Q53. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic.

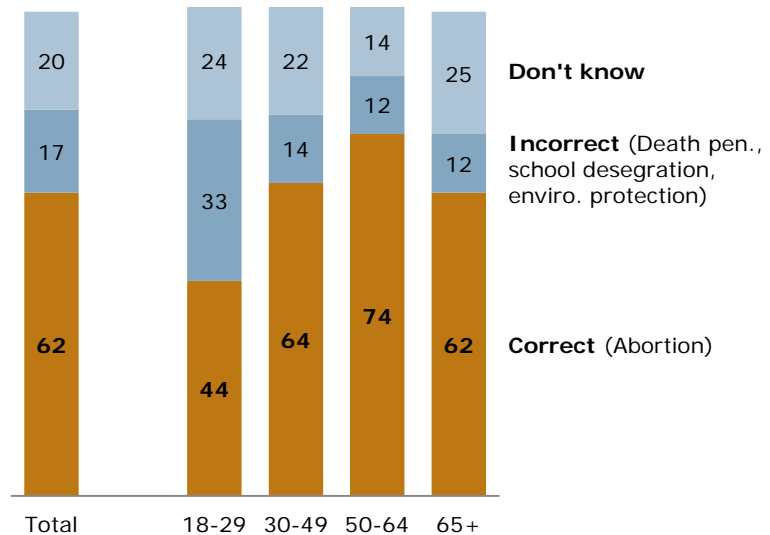
Age and Awareness of *Roe v. Wade*

About six-in-ten Americans (62%) know that *Roe v. Wade* dealt with the issue of abortion. Much smaller percentages incorrectly associate the decision with school desegregation (7%), the death penalty (5%) or environmental protection (5%); 20% do not know.

Among those younger than 30, just 44% know that the case was about abortion; 16% say it dealt with school desegregation, and 41% either say it dealt with another issue (the death penalty or the environment), or do not know. Majorities of older age groups know that *Roe v. Wade* dealt with abortion.

Most Over Age 30 Know *Roe v. Wade* Dealt with Abortion

The Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade* dealt with which of the following issues?



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan. 9-13, 2013.

There also are educational differences in awareness of which issue *Roe v. Wade* addressed. Fully 91% of those with post-graduate education know it dealt with abortion, as do 79% of college graduates, 63% of those with only some college experience and 47% of those with no more than a high school education.

Identical percentages of women and men (62% each) are aware that *Roe* dealt with abortion. Nearly seven-in-ten Republicans (68%) answered this question correctly, compared with 63% of independents and 57% of Democrats.

Views of Abortion's Importance

Slightly more than half of adults (53%) say that abortion is not that important compared with other issues. About a quarter (27%) say abortion is one among many important issues facing the country, while 18% view abortion as a critical issue.

Those who would like to see *Roe v. Wade* overturned are particularly inclined to view abortion as a critical issue facing the country. Nearly four-in-ten (38%) of those who support overturning the abortion ruling say abortion is a critical issue, compared with just 9% of those who oppose overturning *Roe v. Wade*. Among those who favor retaining *Roe*, 68% say abortion is not that important compared with other issues.

Nearly three-in-ten white evangelical Protestants (29%) view the issue of abortion as critical, compared with just 13% of white mainline Protestants and white Catholics. Majorities of white mainline Protestants (61%) and white Catholics (59%) say abortion is not that important compared with other issues. An even higher percentage of religiously unaffiliated Americans (71%) say abortion is relatively unimportant.

Few See Abortion as Critical Issue Facing the Country

	Critical issue %	One of many important %	Not that important %	DK %
Total	18	27	53	2=100
Men	18	26	54	2=100
Women	18	28	52	2=100
18-29	13	23	62	2=100
30-49	17	29	52	1=100
50-64	18	28	51	3=100
65+	25	27	45	4=100
Republican	23	30	46	1=100
Democrat	15	27	56	2=100
Independent	18	25	55	2=100
Protestant	21	30	47	2=100
White evangelical	29	35	35	1=100
White mainline	13	23	61	2=100
Black Protestant	25	25	48	2=100
Catholic	19	27	52	2=100
White Catholic	13	27	59	1=100
Unaffiliated	8	19	71	2=100
<i>View of Roe v. Wade decision</i>				
Overturn	38	36	25	1=100
Do not overturn	9	22	68	1=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan. 9-13, 2013. Q54. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Abortion and Personal Morality

Nearly half of Americans (47%) say they personally believe that it is morally wrong to have an abortion, compared with 27% who say it is not a moral issue, 13% who find it morally acceptable and 9% who volunteer that it depends. These opinions have changed only modestly in recent years.

There are deep differences among religious groups, as well as a wide partisan gap, in opinions about the moral acceptability of having an abortion.

Most white evangelical Protestants (73%), as well as 55% of white Catholics and 53% of black Protestants, say it is morally wrong to have an abortion. That compares with 36% of white mainline Protestants and just 20% of the religiously unaffiliated.

A majority of Republicans (63%) view having an abortion as morally wrong, compared with 45% of independents and 39% of Democrats.

Relatively small percentages of people in all religious, partisan and demographic groups say it is morally acceptable to have an abortion. However, nearly half of Democrats say either that having an abortion is morally acceptable (17%) or that it is not a moral issue (31%). Among independents, roughly four-in-ten say it is either morally acceptable (12%) or that abortion is not a moral issue (30%).

Those who favor overturning *Roe v. Wade* overwhelmingly say it is morally wrong to have an abortion; fully 85% express this view. Opinions about the morality of abortion are more divided among those who oppose overturning *Roe*. Nearly four-in-ten (38%)

Is Having an Abortion Morally Acceptable?

	Morally wrong	Morally acceptable	Not a moral issue	Other/DK
	%	%	%	%
Total	47	13	27	13=100
Men	45	16	26	13=100
Women	49	10	28	14=100
Republican	63	7	18	12=100
Democrat	39	17	31	14=100
Independent	45	12	30	13=100
Protestant	56	9	20	15=100
White evangelical	73	6	11	10=100
White mainline	36	15	32	17=100
Black Protestant	53	8	23	16=100
Catholic	58	9	24	9=100
White Catholic	55	9	29	8=100
Unaffiliated	20	24	43	13=100
<i>View of Roe v. Wade decision</i>				
Overturn	85	5	7	3=100
Do not overturn	29	17	38	16=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan. 9-13, 2013. Q18a. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

say abortion is not a moral issue, while 29% say having an abortion is morally wrong; just 17% of those who favor retaining *Roe* view abortion as morally acceptable.

Overall, nearly one-in-five Americans (18%) say they personally believe that abortion is morally unacceptable, yet also oppose the Supreme Court overturning its *Roe v. Wade* ruling.

Views of the Parties on Abortion

The survey finds that 41% say that the Democratic Party can do a better job of representing their views on abortion; nearly as many (36%) say the Republican Party could do better.

Last March, the Democratic Party held a 16-point advantage as better representing people's views on abortion (47% to 31%). In October 2011, the Democrats led by eight points on this issue (44% to 36%).

Neither Party Has Advantage on Abortion

<i>Which party can do a better job representing your views on abortion?</i>	Rep Party	Dem Party	Both/ Neither/ DK	Dem adv
	%	%	%	
January 2013	36	41	23=100	+5
March 2012	31	47	22=100	+16
October 2011	36	44	19=100	+8
August 2009	33	41	26=100	+8
September 2006	33	44	23=100	+11

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan. 9-13, 2013. Q34j. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted January 9-13, 2013 among a national sample of 1,502 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (752 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 750 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 369 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity and region to parameters from the 2011 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the 2012 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus...
Total sample	1,502	2.9 percentage points
Republicans	403	5.7 percentage points
Democrats	473	5.2 percentage points
Independents	557	4.8 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

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**PEW RESEARCH CENTER
JANUARY 2013 POLITICAL SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
January 9-13, 2013
N=1,502**

QUESTIONS 1-2, 9-12, 16 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

NO QUESTIONS 3-8, 14-15

QUESTION 17g.F2 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

QUESTIONS 17a-17f.F1 AND 17h.F2-17j.F2 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:

Now, a different kind of question ...

Q.18 Do you personally believe that **[INSERT ITEM AND RANDOMIZE]** is morally acceptable, morally wrong, or is it not a moral issue. **[IF NECESSARY: And is [INSERT ITEM] morally acceptable, morally wrong, or is it not a moral issue?]**

		Morally <u>acceptable</u>	Morally <u>wrong</u>	Not a moral <u>issue</u>	(VOL.) Depends on <u>the situation</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
a.	Having an abortion					
	Jan 9-13, 2013	13	47	27	9	4
	Feb 8-12, 2012	13	48	25	9	5
	Aug 11-17, 2009	10	52	25	8	4
	February, 2006	12	52	23	11	2

QUESTIONS 18b-c, 20-25, 30, 31-32, 35-36 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

NO QUESTIONS 19, 26-29, 33, 37-39

QUESTION 34I PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

QUESTIONS 34aF1-34jF2 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

QUESTIONS 40-43, 50 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

NO QUESTIONS 44-49

ASK ALL:

Thinking about a different subject,

Q.51 The Supreme Court's decision in Roe versus Wade dealt with which of the following issues? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]?**

Jan 9-13

2013

62	Abortion
5	The death penalty
7	School desegregation [OR]
5	Environmental protection
20	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

NO QUESTION 52

ASK ALL:**[IF Q.51=2-4, READ: "Actually,"]**

Q.53 In 1973 the Roe versus Wade decision established a woman's constitutional right to an abortion, at least in the first three months of pregnancy. Would you like to see the Supreme Court completely overturn its Roe versus Wade decision, or not?

		-----Gallup----- (RVs)						
Jan 9-13 <u>2013</u>		Nov <u>2005</u>	Jul <u>2005</u>	Jun <u>2005</u>	Jan <u>2003</u>	Mar <u>2002</u>	Aug <u>1992</u>	Oct <u>1989</u>
29	Yes, overturn Roe versus Wade	25	29	30	31	36	34	33
63	No, not overturn Roe versus Wade	65	65	63	62	60	60	61
7	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	9	6	7	7	4	6	6

ASK ALL:

Q.54 Do you think the issue of abortion is a critical issue facing the country, one among many important issues, or not that important compared to other issues?

Jan 9-13 <u>2013</u>		Aug <u>2009</u>	Mar <u>2006</u>
18	A critical issue facing the country	15	28
27	One among many important issues	33	38
53	Not that important compared to other issues	48	32
2	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	3	2

ASK ALL:

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	Lean	Lean
	Republican	Democrat	Independent	No preference	Other party	DK/Ref	Rep	Dem
Jan 9-13, 2013	25	32	38	2	*	2	15	16
Dec 17-19, 2012	21	32	38	4	*	4	15	14
Dec 5-9, 2012	23	33	38	3	1	2	14	19
Oct 31-Nov 3, 2012	26	34	34	3	1	3	13	16
Oct 24-28, 2012	28	33	33	4	*	2	12	16
Oct 4-7, 2012	27	31	36	3	1	3	15	15
Sep 12-16, 2012	24	35	36	2	*	2	14	16
Jul 16-26, 2012	22	33	38	4	*	3	14	15
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	24	33	37	3	*	3	15	17
Jun 7-17, 2012	24	33	39	2	*	2	17	17
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	24	32	36	4	*	4	13	14
Apr 4-15, 2012	24	31	39	3	*	2	15	15
Mar 7-11, 2012	24	34	36	3	1	2	16	17
Feb 8-12, 2012	26	32	36	4	1	2	13	17
Jan 11-16, 2012	22	31	42	3	*	2	17	16
Jan 4-8, 2012	26	31	35	4	*	4	14	14
Yearly Totals								
2012	24.7	32.6	36.4	3.1	.5	2.7	14.4	16.1
2011	24.3	32.3	37.4	3.1	.4	2.5	15.7	15.6
2010	25.2	32.7	35.2	3.6	.4	2.8	14.5	14.1
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8	13.1	15.7
2008	25.7	36.0	31.5	3.6	.3	3.0	10.6	15.2
2007	25.3	32.9	34.1	4.3	.4	2.9	10.9	17.0
2006	27.8	33.1	30.9	4.4	.3	3.4	10.5	15.1
2005	29.3	32.8	30.2	4.5	.3	2.8	10.3	14.9
2004	30.0	33.5	29.5	3.8	.4	3.0	11.7	13.4
2003	30.3	31.5	30.5	4.8	.5	2.5	12.0	12.6
2002	30.4	31.4	29.8	5.0	.7	2.7	12.4	11.6
2001	29.0	33.2	29.5	5.2	.6	2.6	11.9	11.6

PARTY/PARTYLN CONTINUED...

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	Lean	Lean
	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	No	Other	DK/Ref	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>
				preference	party			
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6	11.7	9.4
2001 Pre-Sept 11	27.3	34.4	30.9	5.1	.6	1.7	12.1	13.5
2000	28.0	33.4	29.1	5.5	.5	3.6	11.6	11.7
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.9	33.7	31.1	4.6	.4	2.3	11.6	13.1
1997	28.0	33.4	32.0	4.0	.4	2.3	12.2	14.1
1996	28.9	33.9	31.8	3.0	.4	2.0	12.1	14.9
1995	31.6	30.0	33.7	2.4	.6	1.3	15.1	13.5
1994	30.1	31.5	33.5	1.3	--	3.6	13.7	12.2
1993	27.4	33.6	34.2	4.4	1.5	2.9	11.5	14.9
1992	27.6	33.7	34.7	1.5	0	2.5	12.6	16.5
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	0	1.4	3.0	14.7	10.8
1990	30.9	33.2	29.3	1.2	1.9	3.4	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--

Abortion issue one of most explosive in U.S. history

By BERNARD WEINRAUB

WASHINGTON — Nine years after the Supreme Court ruled that women have a constitutional right to an abortion in at least the first three months of pregnancy, a highly emotional congressional battle is shaping up over efforts to bypass the court's decision.

The issue, one that explores

"For the purpose of enforcing the obligation of the states under the 14th Amendment not to deprive persons of life without due process of law, human life shall be deemed to exist from conception."

moral, religious and social values, is perhaps the most passionate and intensely felt issue in politics today, emerging on Capitol Hill just behind the Reagan administration's economic package as a matter of prime importance.

FUELING THE debate is a powerful movement, with as many as 10 million followers, that successfully designated several legislators for defeat last fall. That movement has also promoted a swing toward conservatism in congress, bringing in anti-abortion senators and placing some in positions of influence, such as Sen. John P. East, now in charge of the judiciary subcommittee overseeing the abortion issue.

Beyond this, President Reagan's stance against abortion, coupled with his appointment of like-minded supporters to key jobs in the Department of Health and Human Services, has plainly buoyed anti-abortion activists.

Last week, the subcommittee headed by East conducted hearings

on the problematic question of when human life begins to exist, a question the Supreme Court has been unable to resolve.

EAST WILL HOLD hearings Monday and Thursday on a bill proposed by Sen. Jesse Helms, a fellow Republican from North Carolina, and Rep. Henry J. Hyde, R-Ill., that would effectively bar all legal abortions.

The bill says: "For the purpose of enforcing the obligation of the states under the 14th Amendment not to deprive persons of life without due process of law, human life shall be

deemed to exist from conception."

The bill would mean abortion of a fetal life could be defined as murder, thereby making the woman and doctor involved subject to criminal prosecution. The bill does not address exceptions for rape, incest or situations that threaten the life of the woman.

According to some women's groups, the legislation, carried to extremes, could also make illegal any birth-control method that is believed to act after conception, perhaps including the intrauterine device.

"What we're now facing is an all-out attack, not only on abortion but on birth control," said Eleanor Smeal, president of the 125,000-member National Organization for Women. "People are shocked. It's going way beyond the abortion issue."

But Hyde is confident of success. "We now have the votes," he said.

The background

Despite opposition from the Roman Catholic Church and various political factions, the nation's courts have made decisions over the past 40 years that extensively altered the realm of birth control.

A PIVOTAL decision came in 1937 with a federal court ruling that laws forbidding doctors to dispense birth control information or devices were unconstitutional.

In its landmark 1973 decision, *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court held, 7 to 2, that a woman's right to privacy barred the government from intruding on her right to choose abortion.

Associate Justice Harry A. Blackmun, speaking for the majority, said the high court had been unable to determine when life begins. "When those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy and theology are unable to arrive at any consensus," he wrote, "the judiciary, at this point in the development of man's knowledge, is not in a position to speculate as to the answer."

The decision was bitterly attacked by some legal scholars as well as "pro-life" advocates, who undertook an ambitious effort to overturn legalized abortion on the ground it was tantamount to murder. After the Supreme Court's decision, the number of legally performed abortions rose dramatically; 1.5 million were performed last year, according to published reports.

Although "pro-life" adherents have sought since 1973 to marshal support for a constitutional amendment that would reverse the high court's ruling, Hyde, Helms and others maintain a legislative bill to circumvent the court is far more likely to succeed.

A CONSTITUTIONAL amendment must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the house and senate and then ratified by 38 state legislatures, while a bill needs only a simple majority in the house and the senate and then the signature of the president.

For the legislation

At one level, the central question of when does life begin — or when does a collection of cells constitute a human being — seems unresolvable and blurred.

Some biologists believe fertilization marks the start of life, while others argue that human life begins about a week or so later, after the fertilized egg has traveled through the fallopian tube and implanted itself in the wall of the uterus.

At the political level, the questions seem intractable.

Hyde has said defining when life begins "is the sort of question congress is competent to answer," adding, "The fetus is human life. It ought to be accorded equal dignity with the snail darter and sperm whale."

The major architect of the legislative proposal is Stephen H. Galebach, a lawyer with the Washington firm of Covington & Burling.

In an article in *Human Life Review*, an anti-abortion publication, he defended the proposal as a legitimate exercise in congressional authority, arguing the Supreme Court's inability to decide when life begins leaves

a void to be filled by congress. The 14th Amendment, which prohibits states from depriving a "person" of life without due process of law, "logically extends to unborn children," he said.

CITING PREVIOUS Supreme Court cases on congressional authority, Galebach also asserted, "In order to define the unborn as persons, congress need only find a likelihood that life begins at conception."

Against the legislation

"The question of when life begins is an ethical and religious matter left to wholly different interpretations," said Faye Wattleton, president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. "It's inappropriate of congress to make any kind of determination."

"Of course the basic question here is, 'Does a woman have a right to choose?'"

Several legal experts, including Laurence H. Tribe of Harvard University, argue the legislation is

unconstitutional and that allowing congress to determine when life begins, as related to the 14th Amendment, would set a damaging precedent. They contend a constitutional amendment is the only way to make such a determination.

Even the ranking legal adviser to the United States Catholic Conference, a bishops' organization that recently reaffirmed support for a constitutional amendment, says it is "utterly unrealistic" to believe the Supreme Court would uphold a measure in which congress declares a fetus to be a person from the moment of conception.

WILFRED CARON, the conference's general counsel, said the legislation would substitute congress's judgment for the court's and restrict the court's right to interpret the Constitution.

The outlook

Miss Wattleton and other opponents of the legislation say they are

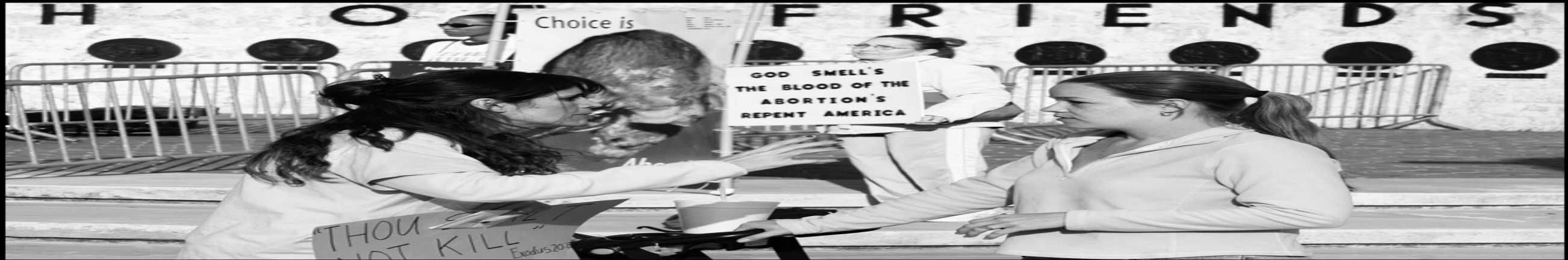
"very optimistic" that the ambitious lobbying of "pro-life" groups will be outweighed by opinion polls indicating a majority belief that abortion should remain legal in all or some circumstances.

Foes of the legislation also note that in the past congress has been hesitant to tinker with federal court jurisdiction on this and other matters. And Sen. Howard H. Baker Jr., senate majority leader, has suggested debate on what he termed the "emotional issues" of abortion and school prayer would be postponed until next year.

Nonetheless, supporters of the legislation are convinced the conservative sweep in last year's national elections, as well as Reagan's support, will enact the Helms-Hyde measure. "It's the perfect moment for our pro-life bill," Hyde said.

Weinraub is a Washington correspondent for The New York Times.

New York Times News Service



Choice is

GOD SMELL'S
THE BLOOD OF THE
ABORTION'S
REPENT AMERICA

"THOU
SHALT NOT KILL"
Exodus 20:13

Sarah Weddington

This ambitious Texas attorney is making her mark in D.C. But she has set her sights on winning political office back home.

By Anne Swardson

WASHINGTON — It is 8:30 on a sunny Sunday morning, and Sarah Weddington has been up for hours.

As she prepares to speak to a friend's church group, she bustles through the house she owns in northwest Washington. The papers are read, and the coffee is made. She has cleaned some shells brought back from a beach vacation and shown a visitor five of her photo albums. She has prepared her speech, shuffling through the notes and cards she uses for the many talks she gives around the country.

Later, she will sit placidly through the introduction as her friend tells the audience of rapt senior citizens about her position as director of the Texas state office in Washington. The stint in the Carter White House. General counsel to the Agriculture Department. Texas state representative. Arguer of the landmark abortion case before the Supreme Court.

Then, in precise diction, speaking in low, well-modulated tones, Sarah Weddington will talk about the qualities necessary to be a good leader: self-confidence, hard work, stamina and good contacts.

ONE OF the last things she says is: "There are a lot of things we can do. One is being available when there is a need for leaders."

Sarah Weddington, 33, should know. From her West Texas beginnings to her current post in Washington, she has made herself available when leaders were needed. Supremely self-confident and a confessed workaholic, she has focused her life on professional progress. Ever since she led devotional services in her father's Methodist church in Canyon, Texas, as a teen-ager, and all the adults praised her performance, Sarah Weddington has sought the admiration of others.

"I tended to want to do it over and over. I think all of us tend to continue the conduct that earns brownie points with other people," she says.

Today, from her office at the foot of Capitol Hill, Sarah Weddington is still making contacts — and still thinking of the future. Even her financial investments are made with an eye toward running for office. There are, after all, many seats of power she hasn't yet touched.

"I think a lot of people have been told, 'You ought to know where you want to be in five years,' and I've never known that," she says. "Nor do I think, on looking back, that I ever

Continued on page 4



Sarah Weddington outside her office in Washington, D.C.

PHOTO: JAN SONNENMAIER

'I can't remember any time when I've been as at peace with myself.'

Continued from page 1

would have aimed as high five years later as I actually went. So I've always done it in terms of 'What can I do today that will increase my options tomorrow?'

Like many ambitious politicians, she has paid a price for her success. Behind her lie countless long nights in offices and hotel rooms. She has eaten and drunk at more political receptions than she can remember. There are the friends she doesn't have time to call, the marriage that toppled under the weight of conflicting careers and goals.

"To me, it's important to have a family. I think she's missing out on something that might be very rewarding for her," says longtime friend Barbara Vackar, who has been active in Texas Democratic politics and now runs a catering firm in Austin.

"She could have had it, and chose not to. With the kind of life she leads, it's difficult to develop personal relationships."

If Sarah ever regrets the choices she made, she doesn't say so. Almost everything she does — be it related to her job, her social life, her hobbies or her education — reflects single-minded purpose.

The toughness is not instantly revealed in her appearance, which can best be described as soft. Her face is round, her figure plump, her voice gentle, and her words polite. But the familiar upswept hair and dress-for-success wardrobe add a more severe note, betraying the determination that put her in the vanguard of professional women who broke down barriers in law, politics and business.

"When I worked in New York a couple of years ago, the investment banker I was working for said: 'Sarah, you've got to learn not to push so hard.' And I think to some extent as I have grown up, I have always pushed hard."

"When I was in college, I went full time. I was the secretary of the student body, and I learned enough to put my way through. In law school, I worked so many hours that not only did I not need a loan, I was able to build up a savings account."

"When I got to the White House, I had the sense that I just wanted to do everything. Now, I have learned that you don't always accomplish as much by pushing that hard."

If she really has learned that lesson, it took her a long time to do so.

As a child and teen-ager in the Texas towns of Abilene, Munday, Canyon and Vernon, Sarah Ragle was an overachiever. Her mother, Catherine, says the only difficulty she faced in raising Sarah was keeping her occupied and chal-

lenged because everything came so easily.

"She never did play with toys very much. She always had a book in the corner, reading," says Mrs. Ragle, who lives with Sarah's father, Doyle, in Lubbock.

Their oldest daughter skipped the sixth grade in Canyon because teachers were having trouble finding work difficult enough for her. By junior high school, she was president of the Future Homemakers of America, a member of the debate team and a drum majorette.

Then the family moved to Vernon, where there were fewer activities. Sarah graduated from high school at age 15, after skipping her senior year. She went on to earn an English-and-speech teaching certificate at McMurry College in Abilene.

Then, she discovered for the first time that men had definite ideas about where women should and shouldn't be.

She decided in 1963, as she was finishing college, that she wanted to be a lawyer. It was a natural choice, since she had good grades. But when she discussed the idea with an attorney who was a family friend, he discouraged her, saying women didn't belong in law school.

But Sarah talked her plans over with her mother and, after receiving encouragement from another family adviser, she enrolled in the University of Texas law school.

"I think in some ways, I just never questioned that I couldn't do it," she says. "I'd always made excellent grades... I can never remember worrying about whether I could make it through law school. I just figured if I wanted to, I could do it."

In 1967, the year she graduated from Texas at the age of 21, she met Ron Weddington, also a UT student, on a blind date. They were married the next year.

She began job hunting, but faced another barrier when she interviewed with a large law firm in Dallas. The firm's partners asked questions such as: What would she do about cooking her husband's dinner if she had to work late? What would she do when the other attorneys used strong language in the office?

A man got the job she had sought.

Sarah was hired instead as an assistant city attorney in Fort Worth. Ron worked briefly for a criminal-law firm there. Then the couple moved back to Austin, where they practiced law together.

It was in Austin that Sarah began to get involved with the women's movement through the Texas Women's Political Caucus. As the group of six or seven women talked about how to get women into campaigns and offices

High Profile



PHOTO: JAN SONNENMAIR

Sarah Weddington

Birthdate: Feb. 5, 1945.

Occupation: Director, Texas Office of State-Federal Relations.

Favorite food: Vanilla ice cream with fudge topping.

Favorite place: The Broken Spoke in Austin.

Favorite activities: Country-western dancing, tennis.

"When I got to the White House, I had the sense that I just wanted to do everything. Now, I have learned that you don't always accomplish as much by pushing that hard."

they gradually realized there was only one way: run a woman candidate. Their choice was Sarah, who at the age of 27 declared she was a candidate for a Travis County seat in the Texas House in 1972. She won.

"It was an exciting campaign," says friend Mary Beth Rogers, who is now deputy state treasurer. "It brought together all sorts of women in Travis County."

The campaign also had a significant side effect: It prompted Sarah to begin wearing her hair in the bun that has since become something of a trademark. She made the decision to change her hairstyle — she had worn it long for years — after a friend's mother overheard a conversation on the bus in which one woman said: "I like what she says, and I like what she does. But I just don't know about voting for that long hair."

By most accounts, Sarah did well in the House. In 1975, *Texas Monthly* named her one of the state's 10 best legislators and described her as "persuasive and respected in debate." She earned a reputation for doing her homework and knowing the issues.

"Even though she was young and the Texas legislature was a macho male body, she was intelligent and forceful enough that she played a key role," says John C. White, who was state agriculture commissioner at the time. "It was not a body that lent itself to women's leadership."

And, of course, there was *Roe vs. Wade*, the landmark Supreme Court decision declaring state restrictions on abortion unconstitutional. It was handed down in January 1973, at the beginning of Sarah's first term in the legislature.

She says she never dreamed in 1969, when she and Dallas lawyer Linda Coffee took the case of rape victim Norma McCorvey, that so much publicity would follow.

The two attorneys only wanted a test case to protest the laws. Sarah, who spent a summer in New York to write the brief, instead got instant fame when, at the age of 25, she argued the case before the court. (She argued again on appeal the following year.)

And she got notoriety: Members of anti-abortion groups continue to picket her speaking engagements.

AS SARAH became more wrapped up in the abortion case and her political career, her marriage deteriorated. Ron, who had twice run for elective office and lost, didn't enjoy his new role.

"I was not a good political wife," he says. "I would not go to some of those functions because they were so deadly boring. It's fun if you're the star or the politician, and a good political wife has to be willing to bask in their reflected glory. Any reflected glory just turned me off. So I stopped going."

Nor did Sarah's focus on women's politics and female-run campaigns make him feel very welcome.

"I probably got pushed a little to the side because, after all, I was a man. Sarah was a rallying point for women's groups... There was a lot of unwillingness to concede I had helped at all (in the campaign). I was in the way. As long as I was around, it was hard (for them) to say men were doing it all."

The 1974 divorce, according to both parties, was very amicable. In fact, the two practiced law together in Austin for more than a year afterward.

Sarah was serving her third term in the legislature when she got a call in 1977 from John White, who had become deputy secretary for agriculture for the Carter administration. The department needed a general counsel, he said, and none of the people he had interviewed in Washington was satisfactory. Was she available?

She was, signing on to supervise a staff of 250 attorneys at the Agriculture Department, the broadest management position she had ever had.

Her move to the White House came in late 1978, when she became special assistant to the president for women's issues. In 1979, she also took over coordination of political affairs.

It was a difficult time. The Carter administration was under fire from several women's groups, which accused the president of not fighting hard enough for the Equal Rights Amendment. Sarah's job during the campaign was to generate support for Jimmy Carter, and she did it tirelessly — in the White House and on countless road trips.

"Sarah would be there (at the office) literally at the crack of dawn and late each night," Ms. Vackar says. "She was seldom home one evening a week. To travel and live out of a suitcase doesn't bother her. She is a true workaholic."

Perhaps that is why Sarah found the post-election letdown so difficult to handle. Despite a busy schedule of teaching law at the University of New Mexico, consulting for the New York investment firm James D. Wolfensohn Inc., writing a monthly Washington column for *Glamour* magazine and working on several women's proj-

ects in conjunction with Texas Woman's University, it took more than a year just to recover.

Now, however, sitting in her office at the foot of Capitol Hill and talking of her new job, she says the low days are over.

"I CAN'T remember any time when I've been as happy or as at peace with myself about things. I have learned, through my life, that I am happiest when I am in a position to change things if I don't like them. As the head of this office, if I don't think the publications that are being put out are right, I can change them. If I think we are not handling something right, I can change it."

Few would disagree she has had a significant impact on the onerous state office, whose 19-person staff keeps the state government and the congressional delegation in touch with issues related to Texas.

Several staff members departed abruptly almost as soon as she arrived last January. The flow of information to Austin, in the form of newsletters and memos, has increased markedly. The staff soon will be expanded by four. And the budget has been increased by 24 percent, from \$862,000 to \$1,072,000.

Many of the changes she has made have put Sarah in the spotlight as well. The office has hosted several receptions for members of the Texas congressional delegation and their staffs. She has made an effort to meet members of Congress from other states, saying that it takes more than Texas votes to pass a bill. And she spends about one week of each month in Austin.

There is little doubt about who is in charge. The letterhead, the newsletters and the documents all carry the logo "The Hon. Sarah Weddington, Director." The "nice-letters" file, as she calls it, is filled with written praise for Sarah and her staff from Austin and Washington. The office scrapbook features page after page of newspaper clippings about her.

She says many of her actions even those involving her personal life, are taken with an eye to her political future. She is investing, for example, in oil and gas ventures and real estate, partly to build up an independent campaign war chest.

"I think, to some extent, your options in government are limited by the money you have," she says. "To be a credible candidate, you need some money. To be able to take a year off and run, you need money. To be able to say 'no' to large contributions from people you probably shouldn't accept it from, you need some money from other sources."

ALSO ADDING to the political fund are the fees from the many speeches Sarah makes each year (most in Texas are free). She usually receives between \$700 and \$1,500 per speech, although she can earn up to \$2,700.

The stock response to questions

“To some extent, your options in government are limited by the money you have.”

about her political future is that she is interested, at some point, in going back to Texas and running for statewide office. Which one and when is less clear. Sarah Weddington is said to be one of the names under consideration for appointment as attorney general if indicted incumbent Jim Mattox is forced to resign.

Her current job, she says, “is very much a step on the road to someplace else. I do not see myself staying here indefinitely. I don’t have a timetable, because that really depends on what opportunities there are, and that depends on what other people do. Right now, (Gov.) Mark (White) knows of my interest if something were to become available.”

In the meantime, Sarah wants to learn Spanish (“It seems to me that people who are seriously involved in Texas politics need at some point to learn to speak Spanish”) and to use computers (“I bought a TRS-80 because it’s a Texas company”).

She has more time for a social life these days, but doesn’t see any particular person.

Would she like to be married again?

“No,” she says during our first conversation. “Both my brother and sister are single, too. I doubt whether any of us will have children.”

Later, she answers differently. “I could see myself getting married at some point,” she says as she sits in her living room and polishes up her speech to the church group. “But I don’t see it anytime soon.”

And, Sarah Weddington says, she’d like to lose weight. She is reminded of that goal on many an afternoon when the French bakery below her office begins preparing the next day’s croissants.

“I’d like to have better eating habits,” she says as she describes the aroma that drifts agonizingly through her window. “And I’m working on it. But I don’t work at it with the intensity I work at my job.”

Roe v. Wade (1973): Excerpts from Majority Opinion

MR. JUSTICE BLACKMUN delivered the opinion of the Court. Chief Justice Burger and Justices Douglas, Brennan, Stewart, Marshall and Powell joined the opinion.

...We forthwith acknowledge our awareness of the sensitive and emotional nature of the abortion controversy, of the vigorous opposing views, even among physicians, and of the deep and seemingly absolute convictions that the subject inspires. One's philosophy, one's experiences, one's exposure to the raw edges of human existence, one's religious training, one's attitudes toward life and family and their values, and the moral standards one establishes and seeks to observe, are all likely to influence and to color one's thinking and conclusions about abortion.

...The principal thrust of appellant's attack on the Texas statutes is that they improperly invade a right, said to be possessed by the pregnant woman, to choose to terminate her pregnancy. Appellant would discover this right in the concept of personal "liberty" embodied in the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause; or in personal, marital, familial, and sexual privacy said to be protected by the Bill of Rights or its penumbras.

...The Constitution does not explicitly mention any right of privacy. ...[T]he Court has recognized that a right of personal privacy, or a guarantee of certain areas or zones of privacy, does exist under the Constitution. ... This right of privacy, whether it be founded in the Fourteenth Amendment's concept of personal liberty and restrictions upon state action, as we feel it is, or, as the District Court determined, in the Ninth Amendment's reservation of rights to the people, is broad enough to encompass a woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy. The detriment that the State would impose upon the pregnant woman by denying this choice altogether is apparent. Specific and direct harm medically diagnosable even in early pregnancy may be involved. Maternity, or additional offspring, may force upon the woman a distressful life and future. Psychological harm may be imminent. Mental and physical health may be taxed by child care. There is also the distress, for all concerned, associated with the unwanted child, and there is the problem of bringing a child into a family already unable, psychologically and otherwise, to care for it. In other cases, as in this one, the additional difficulties and continuing stigma of unwed motherhood may be involved. All these are factors the woman and her responsible physician necessarily will consider in consultation.

On the basis of elements such as these, appellant and some amici argue that the woman's right is absolute and that she is entitled to terminate her pregnancy at whatever time, in whatever way, and for whatever reason she alone chooses. With this we do not agree. Appellant's arguments that Texas either has no valid interest at all in regulating the abortion decision, or no interest strong enough to support any limitation upon the woman's sole determination, are unpersuasive. The Court's decisions recognizing a right of privacy also acknowledge that some state regulation in areas protected by that right is appropriate. As noted above, a State may properly assert important interests in safeguarding health, in maintaining medical standards, and in protecting potential life. At some point in pregnancy, these respective interests become sufficiently compelling to sustain regulation of the factors that govern the abortion decision. The privacy right involved, therefore, cannot be said to be absolute....We, therefore, conclude that the right

of personal privacy includes the abortion decision, but that this right is not unqualified, and must be considered against important state interests in regulation.

... (a) For the stage prior to approximately the end of the first trimester, the abortion decision and its effectuation must be left to the medical judgment of the pregnant woman's attending physician.

(b) For the stage subsequent to approximately the end of the first trimester, the State, in promoting its interest in the health of the mother, may, if it chooses, regulate the abortion procedure in ways that are reasonably related to maternal health.

(c) For the stage subsequent to viability, the State in promoting its interest in the potentiality of human life may, if it chooses, regulate, and even proscribe, abortion except where it is necessary, in appropriate medical judgment, for the preservation of the life or health of the mother.

This holding, we feel, is consistent with the relative weights of the respective interests involved, with the lessons and examples of medical and legal history, with the lenity of the common law, and with the demands of the profound problems of the present day. The decision leaves the State free to place increasing restrictions on abortion as the period of pregnancy lengthens, so long as those restrictions are tailored to the recognized state interests. The decision vindicates the right of the physician to administer medical treatment according to his professional judgment up to the points where important state interests provide compelling justifications for intervention. Up to those points, the abortion decision in all its aspects is inherently, and primarily, a medical decision, and basic responsibility for it must rest with the physician. If an individual practitioner abuses the privilege of exercising proper medical judgment, the usual remedies, judicial and intra-professional, are available.

From http://www.streetlaw.org/en/Page/659/Key_excerpts_from_the_majority_opinion

Roe v. Wade: Excerpts from Dissenting Opinion

Mr. Justice Rehnquist, dissenting.

The Court's opinion brings to the decision of this troubling question both extensive historical fact and a wealth of legal scholarship. While the opinion thus commands my respect, I find myself nonetheless in fundamental disagreement with those parts of it that invalidate the Texas statute in question, and therefore dissent.

The Court's opinion decides that a State may impose virtually no restriction on the performance of abortions during the first trimester of pregnancy. [However, no party in the case was currently in her first trimester of pregnancy.] ... Even if there were a plaintiff in this case capable of litigating the issue which the Court decides, I would reach a conclusion opposite to that reached by the Court. I have difficulty in concluding, as the Court does, that the right of "privacy" is involved in this case. Texas, by the statute here challenged, bars the performance of a medical abortion by a licensed physician on a plaintiff such as Roe. A transaction resulting in an operation such as this is not "private" in the ordinary usage of that word. Nor is the "privacy" that the Court finds here even a distant relative of the freedom from searches and seizures protected by the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution, which the Court has referred to as embodying a right to privacy.

... The Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment undoubtedly does place a limit, albeit a broad one, on legislative power to enact laws such as this. If the Texas statute were to prohibit an abortion even where the mother's life is in jeopardy, I have little doubt that such a statute would lack a rational relation to a valid state objective ... But the Court's sweeping invalidation of any restrictions on abortion during the first trimester is impossible to justify under that standard, and the conscious weighing of competing factors that the Court's opinion apparently substitutes for the established test is far more appropriate to a legislative judgment than to a judicial one.

... To reach its result, the Court necessarily has had to find within the scope of the Fourteenth Amendment a right that was apparently completely unknown to the drafters of the Amendment. The only conclusion possible from this history is that the drafters did not intend to have the Fourteenth Amendment withdraw from the States the power to legislate with respect to this matter.

From http://www.streetlaw.org/en/Page/660/Key_excerpts_from_the_dissenting_opinion

Abortion Reformer Sheds 'Jane Roe'

Associated Press

The young, unmarried woman whose pregnancy resulted in Monday's U.S. Supreme Court decision overturning abortion laws in some 30 states, shed her "Jane Roe" legal identity Friday and talked of the plight which compelled her to seek legal relief.

Some three years ago when Norma McCorvey of Dallas sought legal counsel she was unemployable and greatly depressed, she told Robert O'Brien of the Dallas Bureau of Baptist Press, Southern Baptist Convention news service.

"I was a woman alone with no place to go and no job. No one wanted to hire a pregnant woman. I felt there was no one in the world who could help me," she said.

HER DESPAIR and mental anguish multiplied, she said, when she learned that Texas law would not allow an abortion unless the pregnancy endangered her life.

"Many times," she said, "I felt 'why should I go on? No one showed me any compassion except my doctor and lawyers,'" said Miss Mc-

Corvey, now 25.

Dallas attorney Linda Coffee, then only 27 and one year out of the University of Texas law school, filed suit in federal court seeking overturn of the Texas abortion law.

CRUX OF the arguments by Miss Coffee and her co-counsel, Sarah Weddington of Austin, centered on whether the state has the right to interfere in a doctor-patient decision.

Pleadings drawn by Miss Coffee said also that Miss McCorvey—or "Jane Roe"—sought an abortion "because of the economic hardship which pregnancy entailed and because of the social stigma" involved in bearing an illegitimate child.

The suit said Jane Roe had "only a 10th grade education and no well-paying job which might provide sufficient funds to travel to another jurisdiction for a legal abortion in a safe, clinical setting."

The 3-judge federal court in Dallas overturned the Texas abortion statute in June 1970, but refused an injunction to prevent the state from enforcing it, pending a possible appeal, Miss Coffee said.

MISS MCCORVEY'S attorneys appealed the failure to grant an injunction to the U.S. Supreme Court, and meanwhile she bore the child and placed him for adoption.

"Child birth itself is hard on a married woman, but twice as hard on an unmarried one," explained Miss McCorvey, who said she now works as a "part-time delivery girl" in Dallas.

She hailed the 7-2 decision, handed down by Justice Blackmun, as a "wonderful thing."

"It's great to know that other women will not have to go through what I did," she told the Baptist Press. "I'm glad the court decided that women, in consultation with a doctor, can control their own bodies."

Basically, the decision ruled that the state cannot interfere in a doctor-patient decision for abortion in either the first period of pregnancy, about three months, or the second period.



Plaintiff has no regrets

Abortion decision 'affects every woman'

By Mimi Eckstein
Staff Writer of The News

During late summer of 1969, a carnival worker in Georgia was raped by four men and became pregnant.

The woman, who moved to Dallas after the rape, wanted an abortion but could not get one because of the Texas law that allowed abortions only if the life of the mother was in danger.

Nine years after the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision that overturned the Texas law and similar laws in 30 states, Norma McCorvey, known in the lawsuit as "Jane Roe" during the lawsuit to protect her identity, is still adamant about the issue.

"I think it's high time that women get off their butts and really fight," Ms. McCorvey, 34, said Thursday. "If they really believe in complete control of their own bodies, they ought to work for it."

In 1969, Ms. McCorvey — pregnant, unmarried and 21 years old — lawyers found Linda Coffee and Sarah Weddington, almost fresh from law school, who talked to her and filed on her behalf the Roe vs. Wade lawsuit.

"I did not want the child at all," she said. "I thought, 'Too bad I can't have an abortion.'"

She said she felt trapped into carrying the baby to full term.

She even found a man who would perform an abortion, but he didn't have a license, Ms. McCorvey said. She said she was too scared.

"I tried to raise the money to go to California, where abortions were legal," she said. "But it would have cost, at the time, \$1,500 to fly there, get the abortion done and fly right back. But that was taking another big chance of something going wrong."

She tried to find a job, but employers turned her down because she was pregnant and unmarried.

"There are always a few rotten apples in the barrel," she said. "My feelings were hurt. But I got used to it. Like water rolling off a duck's back."

Eventually, she said, she found a menial job.

"There were lots of lonely, lonely nights and days too," she said.

Her doctor arranged for adoption of the baby. The baby was adopted immediately after birth.

"Just because I didn't want it, didn't mean someone else wouldn't want it," she said.

She said Ms. Weddington kept her informed of the legal proceedings, but after several years, Ms. McCorvey said she became depressed and "dropped out of sight."

Four years after filing the lawsuit — on Jan. 22, 1973 — Ms. McCorvey was in her kitchen reading a newspaper story about former President Lyndon B. Johnson's death when she saw another article telling of the Supreme Court decision.

"I was bitter," she said. "I thought I had been cheated, but everyone feels that way sometime in their life."

"But I was glad for everyone else. I was glad to know some other poor woman wouldn't have to go through what I did. I thought at least she wouldn't have to face the agony of waking up in the morning and driving to work and seeing kids walking and wondering which one was hers. Because it's not easy to give up something you helped grow, regardless of how the seed got there."

Ms. McCorvey, who is unmarried, has a 16-year-old daughter from a short-lived marriage while she was in her teens. Her daughter does not live in Dallas, but keeps in close contact with her mother, she said.

For eight years, Ms. McCorvey had her own painting contracting business in Dallas, doing cabinet work, painting, wall textures and sub-flooring. She now works as a "girl Friday" for a Dallas company.

"Abortions are going to happen anyway," she said. "The police are going to find a woman dead in her car from hemorrhaging because she had an illegal abortion. They will shake their heads and ship her down to the morgue."

"This isn't something we're fighting . . . for Mary Jane across the street. This is going to affect every woman. Not just the rich and the poor, but for every woman."