

When They Say...

You Say...

**Defending the Pro-Life Position and Framing the Issue with
the Language We Use**



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Introduction

Finding the right words in a discussion about any topic can sometimes be a challenge but the abortion issue is among the few that involve life-and-death decisions that can have a lasting impact on so many.

Nearly all pro-abortion arguments fall into one of the following core pro-abortion arguments. There are five arguments with corresponding pro-life counterarguments that use facts and reason in response.

Also included is a chart of keywords we should use in response to pro-abortion groups. The words they use intentionally dehumanize the unborn child, vilify the pro-life movement in our efforts to protect life, and seek to soften attitudes toward abortion - usually by using words other than abortion.

The Words We Use

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The words we choose convey a wealth of meaning and impact how the pro-life issue is perceived.

When They Say...	You Say...
Choice	DECISIONS, ALTERNATIVES, OPTIONS
Fetus	UNBORN CHILD, PRE-BORN CHILD, BABY
It (when talking about the baby)	SHE OR HE
Pregnant Woman, Woman, or Pregnant Person	MOTHER
Doctor or Physician	ABORTIONIST
Clinic; Hospital	ABORTION FACILITY
Reproductive Health Care Providers; Family Planning Centers	ABORTION INDUSTRY
Reproductive Health Care; Termination of Pregnancy	ABORTION
Pro-choice	PRO-ABORTION
Anti-abortion	PRO-LIFE
Prohibit abortion; Ban abortion	PROTECT UNBORN CHILDREN FROM ABORTION
Permissive abortion laws	UNLIMITED ABORTION; COMPLETELY UNPROTECTIVE LAWS
Reproductive rights advocates/supporters	ABORTION PROMOTERS
Liberal abortion laws	EXTREME ABORTION WITHOUT LIMITS
Cardiac activity	HEARTBEAT

Argument 1

It's not a human being – it's just a blob of tissue

Arguments include:

- The fetus is just a part of the woman's body
- It's not a baby, it has no meaningful life, life begins at birth
- It's a parasite

When a woman is pregnant, science tells us that the new life she carries is a completely separate and fully new human being from the moment of fertilization.

By the time most abortions can be performed, the baby already has a beating heart and identifiable brain waves. The baby living in her mother is a distinct and unique human being with the unalienable right to life and deserves full protection under the law.

The baby every mother carries has a beating heart 18-21 days after fertilization and brain waves as early as 6 weeks after fertilization. By 8 weeks of pregnancy, all the organ systems are in place. By 12 weeks eyelids, toes, bones, teeth, and distinct fingerprints are forming. She can grasp objects and may even be sucking her thumb.

- **YOU SAY: Science tells us that an unborn baby is a completely new human being from the moment of fertilization. The baby living in her mother is unique. She deserves, as do we all, the unalienable right to life and the fullest protection under the law.**

Argument 2

A woman has the right to control her own body

These arguments include:

- We can't force a woman to carry a pregnancy to term against her will
- Every woman should have the right to control her own body, aka "reproductive freedom"
- It's a private decision between a woman and her doctor – the government should stay out of our bedrooms!
- A woman should be able to have access to abortion regardless

Every mother is faced with profound decisions to make for herself and her child, but these decisions should never include the right to kill her baby.

Mothers facing difficult pregnancies require accurate and compassionate information about the facts of their baby's development, as well as the practical help that is available to them through the over 3,000 pregnancy centers around the U.S. A mother has a right to be fully informed about the facts and available local resources at least 24 hours before making this life-or-death decision for herself and her child

- **YOU SAY: Every mother is faced with profound decisions to make for herself and her child, but these decisions can never include the right to kill her baby. A mother has a right to be fully informed about the facts at least 24 hours before making this life-or-death decision for herself and her child.**

Argument 3

Every child a wanted child and other social arguments

These arguments include:

- It's unfair to bring an unwanted child into this world; it leads to child abuse
- The poor need to limit their children or they will be forever on welfare
- Women who are abused will be less likely to leave their abuser if they can't have an abortion
- People need to be concerned about overpopulation and quality of life issues

We will never end poverty, abuse, or neglect by killing children. The poor mother who is encouraged to have an abortion today is just as poor tomorrow. Problems such as lack of job security, education, or abuse are not cured by ignoring their existence or using abortion as a way to make it all “go away.” What women need is good basic health care, resources for those facing abuse, , job security, and resources.

In countries where abortion is not legal, it is often because of strong cultural and religious beliefs that respect each new life. That respect needs to be backed up with good development plans, not more dangerous and deadly abortion activity. In countries where there is not even a guarantee of clean running water, abortion will only become a death sentence for women and their babies.

- **YOU SAY: We will never end poverty, abuse, or neglect in our world simply by killing children. The baby is not the real problem, the circumstances are. Killing a child will never help address those issues. It often makes it worse. A poor mother is still poor the day after her child is aborted. Only now she's the mother of a dead baby.**

Argument 4

Back-alley or illegal abortions

These arguments include:

- Tens of thousands will resort to back-alley or illegal abortions and women will die
- Abortion is safer than childbirth

The numbers often used by pro-abortionists to back their claims are vast fabrications as admitted by Dr. Bernard Nathanson, one of the founders of NARAL (recently renamed Reproductive Freedom for All). The true reason deaths have decreased from abortion isn't legalization, it was the widespread introduction of antibiotics. In 1959, Mary Steichen Calderone, the medical director of Planned Parenthood at the time, wrote about the reasons for the decline in deaths. She wrote, "Two corollary factors must be mentioned here: first, chemotherapy and antibiotics have come in, benefiting all surgical procedures as well as abortion. Second, and even more important, [it is] estimated that 90 percent of all illegal abortions are presently being done by physicians."

Contrary to pro-abortion arguments for over 50 years, today's abortion industry is encouraging "self-managed" abortions using chemical abortion methods such as mifepristone and misoprostol. The Food and Drug Administration has placed mifepristone under REMS (Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy) because of the severe side effects women can experience.

- **YOU SAY: Pregnancy is not a disease or an illness but a natural, normal healthy part of many women's lives for which their body is particularly suited and structured. Mifepristone and misoprostol will cause a healthy woman to double over with pain, gush blood, and end the life of her healthy, growing child. This is hardly the profile of a "safe" drug. Yet the abortion industry encourages healthy women with healthy pregnancies to take the drug - putting them at risk.**

Argument 5

The hard cases

These arguments include:

- What if the baby has a deformity?
- What if the mother's life is in danger?

We don't cure illness by killing the patient. Aborting a child with a disability or illness is the height of prejudice. When a family learns that the child they are expecting may have a special need, that family needs support and solid medical information – not the death of their most fragile member. Society must reject using arbitrary standards to measure a person's worth.

When a mother's life is imminently threatened by the pregnancy, the doctor must make an immediate medical decision to save her life. The actions taken in some cases, such as in an ectopic pregnancy, may result in the death of the baby, but the intention is to save the mother's life. In the United States, life-threatening situations during pregnancy are rare. For example, pre-eclampsia occurs in 3-8% of all pregnancies and the only "cure" is to deliver the baby. Fortunately, the condition usually occurs after the 30th week of pregnancy when the child has a high chance of survival.

In most instances, the advancement of modern medicine gives physicians the ability to save both the mother and unborn child.

- **YOU SAY: When a family learns that the child they are expecting may have a special need, that family needs support and good solid medical information – not the death of their most fragile member. No child deserves death because of a disability.**
- **YOU SAY: In the vast majority of cases where the mother's life is in imminent danger, modern medicine gives doctors the ability to save both mother and child. In rare cases, actions may result in the death of the unborn child but the intention was to save the mother.**

When They Say...You Say is issued by the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC).

Founded in 1968, National Right to Life, the federation of right-to-life affiliates in each of the 50 states and more than 3,000 local chapters, is the nation's oldest and largest national grassroots pro-life organization. Recognized as the flagship of the pro-life movement, National Right to Life works through legislation and education to protect innocent human life from abortion, infanticide, assisted suicide and euthanasia.

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For further information or to arrange an interview with one of our experts, please contact the National Right to Life Communications Department at (202) 626-8825 or by email at mediarelations@nrlc.org

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