

Assignment #3
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Abortion is one of the uglier of words in this country. It's a wall that separates people, and ideals. Perhaps only the words Iraq, Republican, and Democrat currently create as much hostility in a conversation. Those who oppose abortion believe that they are on the side of humanity, God, or both. They believe that abortion is the taking of a life, and that there is no justification for it being done. On the other side of the fence stand those who are for the right to abortion. They call it freedom of choice and use history as their weapon to dispute those who would stand against them. They speak of the countless lives that were lost to botched abortions, of the inability of lower income families to provide for the families they have, let alone adding another mouth to feed. They point out the educational system that has failed our youth by not teaching them how to responsibly have sex. There are without a doubt, more reasoning's and rationales behind the opinions of those involved in this debate. The least of which would be very simple ones: if everyone had a right to a free abortion it would crush our health system, and it would also leave some with the impression that they could have as much unprotected sex as they wished because the consequences wouldn't be severe (of course AIDS reminds us how untrue that statement is).

The debate sprang years ago with the verdict of Roe v. Wade which decriminalized abortion in 1973. At that time Medicaid covered abortion care without restriction. The Hyde amendment which was first implemented in 1977, changed this to specify what abortion services were covered. This forbids the use of federal funds for abortions except in cases of life endangerment of the mother, rape, or incest. However, in 1979 the physical health exception was excluded, and in 1981 rape and incest exceptions were also excluded. Then, in September 1993, Congress again rewrote the provision to include funding for abortions in cases where the pregnancy resulted from rape or incest. The present Hyde amendment once again covers endangerment, rape, or incest. The Hyde amendment affects only federal spending. This means

that states are free to use their own funds to cover additional abortion services. New York for example, also funds abortions for health reasons.

Before *Roe v. Wade* abortion was illegal, and women had to pay high prices in order to have a procedure done. Most of the time it was done by an unlicensed practitioner which led to dangerous situations involving non-sterile equipment. Most botched abortions also led to lengthy hospital stays for the woman involved, high costs, and a drain on hospital maternity wards. Not to be forgotten is the fact that many women who were victims of these substandard attempts at an abortion would put off going to a hospital for care because of the stigma involved. Today, while abortion is legal and available to women who have the financial ability to pay for it, it still remains out of reach for many women of low income.

Today's problems arise from the fact that those who support abortion are understandably in favor of having a woman who has suffered rape, incest, or whose life is in danger be able to have an abortion without having the added burden of the cost. The people on the other side of the fence feel that there are other options, though in these sorts of scenarios one might question what they could be. In the case of rape or incest, clearly the mother of the child would face an uphill battle when attempting to love it. An unwanted child is liable to be left in the custody of the state which would create costs much more substantial than that of an abortion. To this those against abortion would surely say that there should be no cost put on a human life. The other factor is that if a woman isn't able to get an abortion on her own she obviously isn't of an income level that would make it easy to care for the child. Most probably the medical costs for the child alone would clearly be much more than the cost of an abortion. Again, the opposition could say that a life is much more precious than a dollar amount.

I'm unable to find enough information to understand why there would be a battle against

having an abortion in the case of saving the mother's life. I would have to assume that people against it feel it's too slippery a slope that could easily lead to bigger issues. All in all the debate over abortion rights is much more involved than the rights themselves. This is a standoff between those who feel that a baby is a life, and life should not be taken so lightly as to dismiss it because it can't fight for itself, and on the other side are those who feel that the bigger picture is brighter than a small vision.