



My Problem with the Pro-Abortion Movement

August 31, 2022

I've spent most of my adult life in the policy/political world focused on non-social issues like taxes, regulations, and national security. I mostly left the education and abortion issues to my friends deeply entrenched in those movements. Nonetheless, after the *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision, I find myself unsettled by the extreme reaction of the pro-abortion movement.

I understand their disappointment in the change in the legal landscape from the tenuous position of *Roe v. Wade*, and will defend their First Amendment right to protest and right to petition their governments in Washington, D.C., and the fifty state capitals to try to claw back aspects of *Roe*. The problem is that so much of the response to *Dobbs* has been beyond the pale—namely, illegally harassing Supreme Court justices and their families at their homes, including one attempted assassination, promoting confrontations at their kids' schools, and the over-the-top claim that Republicans simply want to control the bodies of 150 million women, including their mothers, wives, and daughters.

The most troubling aspect, however, is the utter casualness with which the pro-abortion movement ignores the science and pretends the only thing we are debating is a woman's right to decide what to do with a clump of unremarkable cells. We can have a vigorous scientific debate on what exactly a fertilized egg is from the moment of conception until a heartbeat and brainwave are detected. Many, especially from a religious point-of-view, sincerely view conception as the moment life begins, thereby rendering that life worthy of the full protection of our Constitution and laws; many others reject that view.

Scientifically speaking, no one, including the smartest doctor in the world, can claim that life doesn't exist the moment the heart beats and the brain begins functioning. At that point, the clump of cells becomes human in the sense that it thinks, feels, emotes, dreams, and has the same mental, emotional, and physical attributes as a one-minute-old baby. After all, if we define death as the absence of a heartbeat and brainwave, then consistency requires us to define life as the presence of those things. The pro-abortion movement refuses to accept that science and, even worse, they refuse to ever provide a definition of life allowing us to debate when *in utero* protections should begin.

Once life begins scientifically, that baby deserves the same protections as her one-minute-old peer. Yes, she is totally dependent upon her mother, but that dependence is no different than her born peer. Unlike other animals, no human can survive outside the womb without a

caregiver. Most reasonable Americans understand that reality, which is why a clear majority of Americans support restrictions on abortion at around the time there are beating hearts and working brains.

Functionally, that time occurs around eight weeks after fertilization after which only 10% of abortions under *Roe* occurred. That gives every mother eight weeks to discover her pregnancy and make the decision whether to keep her daughter-to-be or have an abortion. If the pro-abortion movement would accept the science on life and acknowledge that what is living inside every pregnant woman after roughly eight weeks is something far more than a clump of cells, America could have a more reasoned debate on how to deal with issues such as rape, incest, and the health of the mother.

Oddly, the pro-abortion movement loves to paint the pro-life movement with the broad brushstroke of zealotry, but ask yourself this question: is it zealotry to want to protect something for eight weeks from fertilization until life scientifically begins, or is it zealotry to want to ensure that life can be killed for the thirty-two weeks after a heartbeat exists and a brain works, including barbaric procedures like partial-birth abortion and leaving infants born alive to die without care? Seems to me the answer is pretty clear.

My problem with the pro-abortion movement is they ignore the infant in the womb.