

The Battalion Editorial Board

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Abortion rights

Does Congress have the right to uphold a woman's choice?

PRO



Stacy Feducia

In 1973 the Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution guarantees the "right to be free from unwarranted governmental intrusion into matters so fundamentally affecting a person as the decision whether to bear or beget a child."

Wednesday, Congressional supporters of the Freedom of Choice Bill, the legislation to safeguard abortion rights from being overturned, inched closer to an election-year showdown between pro-choice and pro-life factions over the emotion-charged issue of legalized abortions.

The battlefield of almost 20 years is littered with the blood and tears of religious and moral epithets, political and civil cries of right, images of coathangers and trash can babies — all this over an issue that in reality does not deserve debate.

The issue is not the legal right of women to have an abortion but the right of woman to determine the future of her body. The issue is to provide unlimited access for all women to information concerning effective means of birth control and sex education which will enable them to make responsible decisions about the governance of their bodies without government interference.

Unfortunately, the politicization of the single issue of abortion has overshadowed the larger idea of prevention through education and birth control by diverting women's energies from educating Americans about pregnancy prevention. Instead, the fight has turned to keeping every option open to all women.

A political debate transformed into a holy war, the abortion issue stems from the decision about when life actually begins. For every faith and denomination, a new perspective emerges: life begins at conception. Life begins at birth. Life begins at the point a child can survive outside the womb. Each opinion holds equal viability in the forum of ideas and in the American political system which embraces freedom of religion.

Pro-choice is not pro-abortion. Pro-choice allows for the full spectrum of religious and personal beliefs. Pro-choice believes in pro-family through the choice of a woman and her spouse to determine the size of the family, through recognized family planning methods for which they can best provide and love. Pro-choice is pro-woman: it respects her right to decide for herself.

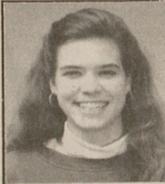
The irony shrouding the current House debate tragically reveals the fact that women's bodies and women's rights are being used as political crowbars to wrest power from opposing sides of the election-year aisle: Democrats attempt to trounce President Bush, who last week refused to sign any such bill. Republicans manipulate the bill to illustrate how out of touch Democrats are from mainstream American thought.

The issue of choice is now political, and sadly the machinations and manipulations of Congress neglect the tragedy of what choice really means: a woman, who by some unfortunate means or unfortunate ignorance, has found herself pregnant with a multitude of decisions before her, the magnitude of which most of us will never have to face. The politicization of this issue has lost the compassion that her situation deserves.

The issue of choice is now political. Though the means through which choice will be decided, the Freedom of Choice Act, reveals an unfortunate continuance of disrespect for and even exploitation of the female, the end must be her right to choose.

Feducia is a senior English and history major

CON



Toni Garrard

Next month, the Supreme Court will make a crucial decision affecting Roe v. Wade. Upon the possibility that the high court overturns the landmark case, abortion rights supporters in Congress are attempting to push a bill through that was introduced three years ago. If passed, this bill, known as the Freedom of Choice Act, will force all states to allow a woman to terminate her pregnancy before the fetus reaches the stage where it can live outside of the womb.

This should not happen. First and foremost is the issue of congressional authority. Should the Supreme Court overturn Roe vs. Wade, this bill would essentially overturn their ruling. According to Timothy Flanagan, acting assistant attorney general, there is no circumstance, regardless of how one feels about abortion, that gives Congress that power.

Patricia Schroeder, D-Colorado, an active supporter of the bill, said at a final hearing that these decisions are difficult "in a society that has not been supportive of women and children." It is a mistake to claim that legalized abortion is a supportive move for women, and it is ridiculous to assume legalized abortion is supportive of children.

A woman who has an unwanted pregnancy is not confined to so narrow a choice as abortion or acting as mother before she is capable. Adoption is a real, viable and crucial choice. So, pro-life is not anti-choice. It is anti-abortion.

No one claims that adoption is as convenient, expedient or private as abortion is. Carrying a child for nine months by all accounts is a difficult cross to bear.

But when we make the decision to have sex, whether we realize it or not, we are taking the chance that a child may be the end result. Even birth control is not 100 percent effective. We have a duty, as adults, to take responsibility for our own actions.

By we, I mean man and woman. No, the man cannot take turns carrying the child. He will not get fat or suffer stretch marks. This fact is not fair, it cannot be changed and it is nobody's fault.

The man still has a responsibility. A responsibility to be supportive, to provide encouragement and even to share the financial strain that will come along with nine months of boarding another life.

A key issue in the Freedom of Choice Act, and the current guidelines for legalized abortion involve the viability of the fetus. By definition, if the fetus is not capable of living outside of the womb, it is not viable and can be aborted.

The fetus's dependence on the mother's womb is not enough of a premise to justify abortion.

To further complicate matters, no one is quite sure of exactly when a fetus becomes viable.

The issue is one where it is impossible to simply argue congressional bills and Supreme Court rulings.

The debate over abortion involves ethical, theological and personal arguments. Granted, when a woman finds herself with an unwanted pregnancy, the fastest way to correct the situation is abortion.

While adoption is not fast, it is an alternative that allows a child to enter the world whose absence may deprive us of a blessing.

It is the right choice.

Garrard is a sophomore speech communications major



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After the races

We have second chance in November to make up for primaries

Now that we've all had the chance to exercise our rights as citizens and play our part in the election process through our all-time favorite state's primary elections, some of us feel compelled to reflect on the undertaking. I suppose you've guessed by now that this includes me.

If an innocent, politically uninformed person had just happened to be wandering aimlessly until he landed right in the middle of Texas during the weeks just prior to the primary election, he would have been bombarded by an electric-like surge of media ballyhoo. The extremely large amount of political promotions was enough to make even TV generation kids like me sink under the weight. With messages endorsing political candidates sneaking into every radio broadcast and every prime-time commercial break, it was easy for a person to become sick of all the media hype, yet it was particularly difficult to actually not develop a political opinion unless one chose to hibernate in a dark closet.

Unlike some of my fellow Aggies who believe that most people were too busy watching soap-operas to formulate their own ideas about the presidential election, I resolve that the majority of citizens, even humble college students, did in fact cultivate opinions of their own. Even some of my beer-guzzling, cowboy-type acquaintances could be found in their usual arena of the Dixie Chicken

debating on which political candidate they felt was the best.

After witnessing this event, I came to the somewhat scary realization that most people do actually have an opinion when it comes to politics. Well, at least they do for the time frame just before the primaries until the following November. Even though many individuals may not know the name of the current vice president (Hint: It starts with a Q), I must give them credit for using their noodles for at least a short period of the year. The next question that came to my mind was, "On what do people base their newfound political convictions?"

I suppose there might be a sprinkling of individuals, who while staring into space one evening, were hit by lightning bolts which transformed them into instant news junkies with unending political knowledge. But with the exception of this elitist group, the greater number in society does not know very much about the political arena. Many people would rather be caught dead than to read something other than the comics or sports section of the newspaper (except for the third floor of Hobby Hall who read my column occasionally).

If people are not basing their voting decisions on political literature or dailies like the Wall Street Journal or our own favorite Battalion, where are they getting their information, you might ask. My theory is that for the most part citizens are being weighed down with persuasive campaign jingles from every camp from the all-powerful audio/visual media. Acting as giant sponges, people are soaking up the visual images of political candidates presented on television and matching these pictures to names when it comes to voting. Sometimes I

tend to be pessimistic about humanity, and thought that my theory might be a trifle cold-hearted towards my fellow Ags. But my feelings were changed after last Wednesday afternoon.

As I trudged along Northgate to get my weekly use out of the automatic teller machine, I overheard a group of students discussing the presidential candidates. But instead of discussing the men's leadership ability in a traditional way, the topic of conversation focused on which Democratic contestant had the best haircut. I realized that I had just landed on the epitome of typical voting citizens.

If you or someone you know have paraded down this path of undecided decision-making, the first step is to admit it. Instead of feeling guilty about making an uninformed decision or playing dot-to-dot on your primary ballot, realize the stupidity of it and repent in time for the November election. Half of our job is already over, but if we change our ways and truly wish to become intelligent decision-makers, we can alter the outcome of the presidential election in a way that is best for our society (and for Texas A&M, of course).

We, as voters, need to set some important goals for the November presidential election. We need to learn to discern between the myriad of information forced upon us by the media and pertinent issues that merit actual attention. We as citizens must clarify in our minds what the true definition of a leader is, for it is only then that we can attempt to make intelligent decisions in choosing our leaders.

Saddler is a freshman psychology major



Lori Saddler

Mail Call

Stop the planes at Olsen Field

Lately at Aggie baseball games, a trend has developed that those of us who hold Olsen Field sacred find greatly offensive. I am referring to the paper airplanes being thrown onto the field during play. Now I realize that some students may feel the need to practice their engineering skills, but Olsen Field is not the place.

Here at A&M we are blessed with one of the finest baseball facilities of any college in the country, and to litter our beautiful field in such a manner is disrespectful not only to our team, but to the school itself. Such behavior implies disinterest from the crowd, looks bad to the visiting teams and fans and definitely has no place in Aggieland.

If you are not going to come out to support our team and spend a couple of hours watching a great baseball game, do the rest of us a favor and stay home.

Come on, Ags. Not only is flying

paper airplanes bad bull, but behavior such as that you'd expect to find out at Disch-Faulk.

Kristen Abrahamsen Class of '94

Trash at Olsen shows bad bull

All right Ags, the way I see it we've got a problem here in Aggieland. The problem is trash at Olsen Field throwing trash on Olsen Field. It really makes us look bad to have the P.A. announcer have to ask us not to throw trash on our own field.

This is the type of stuff that happens at t.u. or LSU It shouldn't happen here. In short, stop throwing paper airplanes!

Will Newnum Class of '94

Have an opinion? Express it!

The Battalion is interested in hearing from its readers. All letters to the editor are welcome.

Letters must be signed and must include classification, address and a daytime phone number for verification purposes. Anonymous letters will not be published.

The Battalion reserves the right to edit all letters for length, style and accuracy. There is no guarantee that letters will appear.

Letters may be brought to 013 Reed McDonald, sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111 or can be faxed to 845-2647.