



Abortion Talking Points

1. **The most effective way to reduce the need for abortion is to reduce unintended pregnancies:** Almost half (49%) of all pregnancies in the United States are unintended, including more than 30 percent within marriage.¹ Better access to contraception, age-appropriate comprehensive sex education, and emergency contraception could cut the number of unintended pregnancies and abortion dramatically.
2. **In at least 34 states, women's freedom to choose is at risk of being restricted by the legislature and governor:** Nineteen of these states would ban abortion in all or most circumstances if *Roe v. Wade* were overturned.²
3. **Access to abortion is limited:** Eighty-seven (87) percent of all counties in the U.S. have no identified abortion provider.³
4. **Abortion is a very safe procedure, especially in the first trimester:**
 - o The risk of complication is minimal — less than one percent of women experience a major complication.⁴
 - o The risk of death associated with childbirth is 11 times greater than the risk of death from an abortion.⁵
 - o Legal abortion is safer than a tonsillectomy, an appendectomy, and a shot of penicillin.⁶
5. **Nearly 9 in 10 abortions take place early in pregnancy:** Eighty-eight (88) percent of abortions are performed during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, and 98 percent occur during the first 20 weeks.⁷
6. **1 in 3 women will have an abortion by the time they are 45 years old:** Women of various ages, ethnicities and income levels choose abortion, one of the most common surgical procedures.⁸
7. ***Roe v. Wade* does not give women an unlimited right to abortion throughout pregnancy:** In *Roe*, the Supreme Court legalized abortion until viability, the point at which the fetus is capable of surviving outside the woman's body. After viability, *Roe* allows states to ban abortion except when necessary to protect the woman's life or health.²
8. **Many religions support a woman's right to choose:** Religions in support of a woman's right to choose include American Baptist Churches USA, Episcopal Church, Presbyterian Church (USA), United Methodist Church, and United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism. Less than one fourth of U.S. Catholics agree that abortion should be illegal in all circumstances.¹⁰
9. **Despite the claims of some anti-choice groups, studies have not shown that induced abortions increase the risk of breast cancer.**¹¹ Independent experts such as the National Breast Cancer Coalition, the American Cancer Society, and the World Health Organization have concluded that no link has been established between abortion and breast cancer.¹²
10. **In states that enforce no mandatory parental consent or notice requirements, 61 percent of parents know of their daughter's pregnancy:** Among minors who did not tell a parent of their abortion, 30 percent had experienced violence in their family or feared violence or being forced to leave home.¹³

Notes

1. Stanley K. Henshaw, *Unintended Pregnancy in the United States*, 30 FAMILY PLANNING PERSPECTIVES 26-27 (1998).
2. NARAL/THE NARAL FOUNDATION, WHO DECIDES? A STATE-BY-STATE REVIEW OF ABORTION AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS vi (15th ed. 2006).
3. Stanley K. Henshaw, *Abortion Incidence and Services in the United States, 1995-96*, 30(6) FAMILY PLANNING PERSPECTIVES 266-68 (1998).
4. The Alan Guttmacher Institute (AGI), *Facts in Brief: Induced Abortion* (May 2005).
5. AGI, *Facts in Brief: Induced Abortion* (May 2005).
6. WARREN M. HERN, ABORTION PRACTICE 23-24 (1984), citing J.E. Wennberg et al., The Need for Assessing the Outcome of Common Medical Practices, 1 ANNUAL REVIEW OF PUBLIC HEALTH 291 (1980); Nancy Felipe Russo, Unwanted Childbearing, Abortion, and Women's Mental Health: Research Findings, Policy Implications (summary of presidential address), ROCKY MOUNTAIN PSYCHOLOGIST (1992), at 9.
7. AGI, *Facts in Brief: Induced Abortion* (May 2005).
8. AGI, *Facts in Brief: Induced Abortion* (May 2005).
9. *Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. 113 (1973).
10. Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, We Affirm! National Religious Organizations Support Reproductive Choice, at <http://www.rsrc.org/religion/weaffirm/affirm.html> (last visited Jan. 24, 2002); Catholics for a Free Choice, *Catholics Are Pro-Choice*, at <http://www.catholicsforchoice.org> (last visited Jan. 6 2006), citing CBS/New York Times Poll (July 2000).
11. Mads Melbye et al., *Induced Abortion and the Risk of Breast Cancer*, 336(2) NEW ENG. J. MED. 81 (Jan. 9, 1997).
12. National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, Cancer Facts: Abortion and Breast Cancer, at http://cis.nci.nih.gov/fact/3_53.htm (last modified June 1999); National Breast Cancer Coalition, Position Statement on Abortion and Breast Cancer Risk, at <http://www.natlbcc.org/bin/index.asp?strid=364&depid=9&btid=1> (last modified Jan. 2002); American Cancer Society, Can Having an Abortion Cause or Contribute to Breast Cancer? at http://www.cancer.org/eprise/main/docroot/CRI/content/CRI_2_6x_Can_Having_an_Abortion_Cause_or_Contribute_to_Breast_Cancer (last modified Oct. 12, 2001); World Health Organization, Induced Abortion Does Not Increase the Risk of Breast Cancer (Fact Sheet No. 240) (June 2000), at <http://www.who.int/inf-fs/en/fact240.html>.
13. AGI, *Facts in Brief: Induced Abortion* (May 2005).