

Ban Act controversy

Partial-birth Abortion Ban Act established as constitutional

Matt Olson
Commentary Editor

On April 18, the Supreme Court ruled on the case *Gonzales v. Carhart*, which distinguished one form of abortion, partial-birth abortion, as criminal.

This decision is hardly about being pro-choice or pro-life.

For those people who consider themselves "pro-life," it bears mentioning that the procedure being banned is for use during the 18th through 26th weeks of the second trimester, which means that less than 1 percent of all abortions in America fall into that window of time. This decision and the precedence it upholds is in no way getting rid of abortion.

Something to consider for those who are "pro-choice": the decision furthers the idea of respecting fetal life. It criminalizes a procedure that is inhumane to a potentially functional human baby. But, what exactly does the decision uphold?

Partial-birth abortion, as it's widely termed, is in fact a very specific procedure that is known in the medical community as "intact dilation and extraction."

The details of the procedure are gruesome. First, the cervix is dilated for easy access. Second, the doctor performing the procedure extracts the fetus with surgical tools until the body is outside the womb. Finally, the skull of the fetus while still within the womb is destroyed, causing the abortion. Really, the procedure is a horrific act that is unnecessary and medically unsafe.

During the passing of the 2003 Partial-Birth Abortion Act, the Supreme Court heard testimony from the medical community in which

it was widely stated that the procedure was unnecessary to protect the health of the woman, which is the strongest argument many have when claiming that the Ban Act is unconstitutional.

Fortunately, the Supreme Court knows what it's talking about. When questioned further, the American Medical Association also agreed that the procedure was "inhumane" and "unnecessary" in nearly all circumstances.

Viability (when the baby is able to survive outside the womb) also falls into the window of time in which the procedure takes place. Viability is different with every pregnancy, but as a precedent it's widely believed to be morally unsound to abort after viability occurs unless there are medical complications.

Another concern widely voiced by uninformed pro-choice groups and individuals is the concern for the life of the mother. Of course this exception is covered in the 2003 Ban Act and every single other law concerning abortion. Due to the ruling in *Roe v. Wade*, which was decided in 1973, there are always exceptions that protect maternal life.

Addressing the difference between a complication that threatens the health of the mother and the life of the mother is unneces-

sary. The semantics of such distinctions have been debated endlessly in the past. There are legal definitions and specific exceptions that give doctors guidelines for that diagnosis.

In the April 18 decision, the Supreme Court maintained its stance on the differentiation between protecting life and protecting health. Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote the majority opinion in the *Gonzales v. Carhart* case in which he maintained that there need not be a stipulation about the health of the mother because partial-birth abortion is always unsafe.

Considering the fact that such a small percentage of abortions occur during the 18th through 26th weeks, and it is only in extraordinary circumstances that the life of the mother is in danger, the Ban Act seems both perfectly reasonable and legally sound. Without delving into the moral ambiguity surrounding the whole subject and the religious arguments made about terminating a pregnancy, one must trust in the thorough inspection of specific laws by the Supreme Court and the precedence established in the past concerning abortion.

All in all, the decision is not about abortion as a practice, but about the humanity and safety of a medical procedure. The sad thing is that this medical issue is embroiled in a debate that everyone in the nation feels strongly about, and thus has gained opposition and legal scrutiny simply because of vehement people without perspective.



Dear Dr. Kim,

PLEASE HELP! I have a friend who has been dating this controlling jerk for about eight years. He treats her like crap, calls her names, and I suspect he even cheats on her.

I've tried talking to her about him, but every time I do, she gets really distant with me and stops calling me. I know she really loves him, but she deserves so much better.

How can I convince my friend that this guy isn't worth her time? I really care about her, and I hate to see her treated this way.

Sincerely, Kristie R.

Dear Kristie,

I have never understood why so many amazing, bright and good-hearted girls spend their time on losers who don't deserve them. Try as I might to wrap my mind around this concept, clarity eludes me every time.

Your friend is like many other girls who lack the self-esteem to hold standards for the way they are treated. You're not a therapist; you can't expect to repair years of emotional damage done by this woman's loser boyfriend. So, you are left with two choices:

Choice # 1 - Sit your

friend down, look her directly in the eye and tell her that you're losing respect for her. If you've already voiced your concern about the way this asshole is treating her and she doesn't care to listen, you have to take a more drastic step.

She may not care what his hurtful words do to her, but maybe she will pay attention if she sees how it hurts her friends to see this go down. Remind her of how free she was before she met him.

I will warn you, though - most likely, your friend will not listen to you. She'll probably cling closer to him and stop hanging out with you. If she's been with this guy for eight years, she's not going to suddenly "see the light" when you tell her what a jerk he is.

Choice # 2 - Continue being friends with your friend, completely ignoring the abuse that goes on in her life.

This may make you feel like somewhat of a bad friend, but let's think about this realistically. Obviously, your friend likes this kind of nonsense, or she wouldn't have put up with it for so many years. Maybe he has other qualities that you can't see that keep her hanging around. Who knows? Maybe he's really good in bed, or has a healthy trust fund.

If he beats her, you should probably call the cops. But chances are, she won't press charges and the abuse will continue. Some chicks really love that stuff. And hey - if she's dating him, there's one less loser for you to accidentally date until you realize he hates women.

Disclaimer: Kim Maier is not a real doctor, nor has she ever been. She's working on it though.

To read more of "Dr. Kim," go to askejean.com and click on the "Top Campus Sex Columnists."

ASG Elections highlight poor voter turnout on campus

Matt Olson
Commentary Editor

Last Wednesday, *The Clackamas Print* released the results of the ASG Elections on the back page of our paper.

The results weren't all that surprising: Tim Lussier won and will serve another year as student body president.

What was surprising was the number of votes with which he won. Lussier won with a grand total of 89 votes ... out of 1,792 full-time students.

Just do the math. What's 89 divided by 1,792? It's less than 5

percent of the full-time students. But don't forget the 13 thousand part-time students also enrolled here at Clackamas.

All told, less than 1 percent of enrolled students bothered to take five minutes out of their day and vote. Does this bother anyone?

"It frustrated me because I was worried that I wouldn't win," said Lussier.

Fortunately for Lussier, those 89 votes were more than two-and-a-half times as many votes as his competitor, Felisha Borg, received.

"I think it was a clear message; two-and-a-half times the vote was a clear message," said Lussier.

"I'm not upset with the results. I think it's what the student body wants."

At least 1 percent of the student body.

Every four years, America elects a president. Arguably the most important vote any US citizen has is only cast by about 50 percent of the voting-age population.

So, what's there to complain about when so few students vote for an insignificant student government on some community college campus?

Well, in the same way that Americans influence the course of their country by electing a presi-

dent to represent their interests domestically and abroad, students here on campus must elect a student government to represent their interests on campus and at the capital in Salem.

Where did it go wrong? "I think it wasn't promoted as well as it could have been," said Lussier. "Our vice president does the promotion and is the election's committee chair."

Obviously, fingers may be pointed, or blame may be placed by individuals, but the truth is that the responsibility ultimately falls on the students to take initiative.

"I'm not gonna blame it on the students and say they're apa-

thetic," explained Lussier.

But that's exactly what happened. Without a perspective on the importance of ASG, most students just don't care.

The elections are done, the votes have been counted and the winner has been chosen. Lussier will serve as student body president for another year.

Congratulations. Yet, it seems a hollow victory when one examines the severe lack of input by the student body in the election. The majority was not represented, nor was there an effort made by that majority to voice their opinions. It's a shame.

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