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Pence would put an enormous amount of energy and resources into repealing Roe v. Wade and undercutting women's ability to live our own lives and create our own destinies as our mothers and grandmothers fought for, and I think it's just a very scary thought.

**E.G.:** A lot of anti-abortion legislation has passed in recent years. What are some examples of the most limiting – and the most ridiculous – pro-life legislation that has been signed into law?

**I.G.:** We've seen, in a couple different states including Indiana and Texas, these laws that demand women who choose to terminate pregnancies to provide burial for the fetuses. These laws are, in practice, impossible to actually implement and serve no purpose other than to try and shame women from making the decision and create a sense of personhood around the fetus, which has been a long-term goal for the anti-choice movement.

In terms of the most limiting – there are so many, really. The law that Mike Pence signed in Indiana this past spring was one of the most significant because it did in fact threaten doctors with jail time for performing certain kinds of abortions and therefore was intended to have a chilling effect on doctors' providing the services that their patients need, and I think that should really scare everyone when our government gets involved, at that level, into medical decisions, because the outcomes are just always bad.

**E.G.:** What has been the effect of these laws in Indiana? Have abortions gone down?

**I.H.:** First of all, I would say we haven't seen that same level of study in Indiana that we've actually seen in Texas, but this was just signed in the spring, so I don't think we know.

What we do know is in Indiana, Mike Pence overseeing the defunding of Planned Parenthood and the closure of the rural clinics has actually resulted in really, really terrible health outcomes: HIV rates are up and maternal outcomes are down, which means women who are carrying pregnancies to term are faring more poorly.

We do know from data globally that everywhere abortion is illegal or difficult to obtain, the number of abortions doesn't go down, but the number of injuries and deaths of women go up. And we did see some very concerning evidence that reinforced that understanding in Texas in the years after those clinics were being shut down – that showed that women trying to self-abort, because they couldn't get to a clinic, spiked to 7 percent, where the national average is like 2 percent. In very rural parts of Texas, like the Rio Grande Valley, that were particularly hard hit, that number went up to 12 percent.

We know where that path leads, and it's nowhere good if you genuinely care about women's health, which is why we fight these restrictions as hard as we do.

**E.G.:** I Googled "Home Abortion" and was both surprised and horrified by some of the results that popped up. Do you know what techniques women are most commonly employing to try to terminate their pregnancies that might be dangerous to their health?



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PRESIDENT OF NARAL PRO-CHOICE AMERICA

**I.H.:** You are probably better off talking to a doctor about this, but I can tell you that we have had abortion providers in Texas saying that they are getting calls at the clinic that are like, "I can't get there; how about I tell you what I have in my kitchen cabinet and you tell me what to do."

Now, of course these doctors are not answering that question, but you hear everything reported from drinking bleach to throwing themselves down the stairs to worse.

**E.G.:** Why should people in pro-choice states, such as Oregon, care about the erosion of these rights in other states, and how can people in Oregon help women struggling with unwanted pregnancies in those other areas?

**I.H.:** We're having a national conversation. The idea that what happens in Texas or what happens in South Carolina doesn't affect people in blue states is pure folly.

We've seen this in places like New York, where the only point in Gov. (Andrew) Cuomo's 10-point plan to help women that didn't get passed was the provision that would make sure abortion was easy to get, even in the case of an overturning of Roe v. Wade.

The real cost is that we can't actually have a forward-looking conversation about what women really need.

There is such a huge opportunity to look at Oregon as an example. You are one of the handful of states where women can use Medicaid to get abortions, so we see the resulting impact on poverty alleviation and women in poverty being able to access the rights that women who have means have always been able to have.

The other kinds of things that we need to

assure the full spectrum of reproductive freedom and reproductive justice – everything from paid parental leave to universal access to contraception regardless of what your boss thinks – those are the kinds of conversations that we need to be having. But when we are so focused on the lowest common denominator, states like Oregon that are really looking hard to expand freedoms, can't always achieve that.

What people in Oregon can do is talk openly about the benefits of having broad access and what it has brought to the state. I think that is incredibly important for people around the country to see.

It's really important for people in Oregon to talk about how proud they are to come from a state that really prioritizes reproductive freedom and reproductive justice and demand that your elected representation actually challenge the anti-choice forces that they go up against every day in Congress, because when we challenge them, they lose. We don't lose.

We actually have a pro-choice majority in this country, just like you do in Oregon, but the challenge that we face is that too many of us are silent

about it, and so the anti-choice minority has gotten the upper hand.

In Oregon, particularly, where there is not really a question about where the state stands, we need to hear folks standing up and fighting the good fight, not saying, "We solved it here, so we don't have to worry about it."

**E.G.:** There is a so-called faction of the feminist movement that claims abortion rights and women's rights don't mix. Do you think it is possible to be a pro-life activist and a

feminist at the same time?

**I.H.:** I think it is possible to personally believe that you would never choose abortion and be a feminist, because the whole point to being a feminist is believing that women are fully capable of making informed choices on their own.

I don't think it's possible to believe that you are better suited to impose your will on another woman and consider that feminist, because my version of feminism is that I trust my female counterparts to know what's best for them, and I have confidence that when every woman is empowered to make her own decision, the outcomes are better for everyone.

Now, I find it very hard to believe that there is a definition of gender equality or feminism that doesn't centralize – or have fundamental beliefs that we are in control of our own physical beings, and I've yet to see any of that activism yield positive outcomes for women.

**E.G.:** With advances in medicine, we are now able to keep a small percentage of babies born as early as 22 weeks into pregnancy alive outside the womb, although they are likely to have long-term health problems. What does change to fetus viability mean for the abortion debate?

**I.H.:** I think for us, the fundamental question is: Do we actually entrust women in consultation with medical professionals to do what's best for them, and the answer to me is yes – irrespective of advances in medical technology because what we know is that when we allow politicians to make those decisions instead of women in conjunction with their doctors, the outcomes are bad.

It doesn't fundamentally change our perspective on who we think has the best information to provide in the decision making process, but I think that it is such a fabulous thing for women with wanted pregnancies who are facing challenges, and we should care about that.

(Now, a fetus is considered viable at 24 weeks.)

**E.G.:** Why does this potential two-week change in viability – along with claims that babies feel pain at 20 weeks – matter so much to abortion rights opponents when 99 percent of women decide to terminate their pregnancy long before the 20th or 22nd week of their pregnancy?

**I.H.:** I think it's because anti-choice folks know that they've lost the debate on the merits: When women have the option, they terminate pregnancies they're not ready to carry to full term very early in the pregnancy – and most people are just fine with that.

What they have actually done is make it more and more difficult to access abortion early in pregnancy, and then try and change the conversation about what that means later in the pregnancy.

The majority of medical science has actually rejected the idea that fetuses feel pain at 20 weeks, but the reality is, as you point out, that is not actually the conversation that most women are having. Most women are trying to access the tools that they need to make their best decision early in pregnancy, but when we have that conversation, the anti-choice movement loses.