

Do you know Roe?

Diane, single, eight weeks pregnant and a junior in college was concerned that having a baby would change her life.

Michelle was frightened and felt she was too young to have a baby; her parents told her abortion would be the best solution to her “problem.”

Sherri, a married mother of three said she already has all the children she wants.

Allie, an honor student in high school, did not want anyone to know she had sex.

Lucy, 27, seven months pregnant and a successful attorney, said she realized late that she was not ready for the responsibility of motherhood.

Heather, already in a strained relationship with her boyfriend, believed abortion was wrong but was afraid he would leave her if she did not have the abortion.

The law teaches. *Roe v. Wade* has taught a generation of Americans that abortion is okay. Yet most women say they would not have had an abortion if they felt supported in their pregnancy.

Many women and men deeply regret a decision they cannot take back. The painful wounds of abortion cause dysfunction in families and in the whole of society, destroying relationships and hope.

The reasons cited above reflect those given by more than 90 percent of all women seeking abortion. None of the women or babies was “unhealthy” by medical standards. However, their reasons were all noted as “health” by the abortion clinic staff.

A woman (or minor girl in Maryland) may have an abortion for any reason at all and at any time up to the birth of her baby. This is the so-called “health exception” codified by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Roe v. Wade*. This is the reality and the legacy of *Roe* – abortion on demand for any reason at all up to birth. This should shock us; and I think for most people it does.

Then why do some polls claim that a majority of Americans still favor the decision of

Roe v. Wade? The simple answer is public ignorance about what Roe actually said aided by some pollsters' misleading questions.

A 2005 Harris poll asked, "In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that state laws which made it illegal for a woman to have an abortion up to three months of pregnancy were unconstitutional, and that the decision on whether a woman should have an abortion up to three months of pregnancy should be left up to the woman and her doctor to decide. In general, do you favor or oppose this part of the U.S. Supreme Court decision making abortions up to three months of pregnancy legal?" (emphasis added)

To this question 51 percent said they were in favor, and pollsters reported that "A small majority still supports Roe v. Wade." The question deceptively implies that Roe only allowed for abortion in the first trimester, not the entire pregnancy as it actually did.

Later in the survey, respondents were asked whether they thought abortion should be legal by trimester. Seventy-two percent said abortion should be illegal in the second trimester and 86 percent said abortion should be illegal in the third trimester.

Another poll conducted by Zogby International asked if abortion should be allowed after the heart has begun to beat. Sixty-one percent answered "no." Heartbeat occurs at 21 days – in the first trimester.

Sixty-five percent said abortion should not occur after brainwaves can be detected. Again, brainwaves can be detected midway in the first trimester. This is not support for Roe.

These examples demonstrate just how far outside the mainstream of public opinion the Roe decision is. On Jan. 22, 2008 thousands of people will gather in Washington, D.C., at the annual March for Life to send the message that the time has come for Roe v. Wade to be overturned.

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