

THE  FEMINISTS FOR LIFE
OF AMERICA

AMERICAN FEMINIST



Life

after Roe



New FFL video unveiled!

While many consider what's next after Dobbs, no matter where a woman in need may be, as Feminists for Life, we remain committed to our mission of woman-centered resources and support. Women deserve better.

Invite your family and friends to check out our new video on our website www.feministsforlife.org and on our YouTube channel and Facebook and Instagram pages.

As we close out our 50th Birthday in 2022 and prepare for our first post-Roe anniversary in 2023, we ask you to please...

GIVE TO OUR YEAR-END MATCHING CAMPAIGN:

1. Please make a tax-deductible donation by December 31 that will qualify for our year-end match led by the FFL Board and Friends (including former Board members). Gifts of stock are also appreciated.
2. Make a new or increased monthly gift, and your first gift will be *double*-matched!
3. If your employer matches donations, please include a corporate matching form to double your gift yet again!

The matching gift campaign ends December 31, 2022, so please go online now to www.feministsforlife.org/support, or use the enclosed envelope. On behalf of those we serve—future leaders and women at high risk of abortion—we thank you!

Feminists for Life is a 501(c)(3) organization. All contributions and donations to Feminists for Life of America and WomenDeserveBetter.com are much needed, *deeply appreciated*, and tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Dear Feminists for Life,



This coming year, we will celebrate our first post-Roe anniversary. There is much to celebrate, but even more challenges loom as abortion advocates work to go around state protections and facilitate more chemical abortions. Our mission is to help address the unmet needs of women and teens so that they will never even consider abortion. We have so much more to do.

The increased pressure upon the poorest among us, women of color, students, young working women, and victims of violence is staggering. We aim to reach women at risk through our WomenDeserveBetter.com helpsite and future leaders in all fields through FFL's College Outreach Program.

Recognizing that we need to reach teens before they hit college to provide them with a foundation of pro-life philosophy, we have created a comprehensive program that continues to grow. Most recently, we have just announced our new Girls Deserve Better® Instagram page. including a NEW video series letting them know that they are FOREVER Priceless™!

As so many of you have written, now that Roe has been overturned, Feminists for Life has never been more important. We have an opportunity our feminist foremothers never had: to make abortion unthinkable.

In order to fulfill our mission of resources and support for the most vulnerable women and children, we urge you to give generously.

Because women deserve better,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Serrin".

Serrin M. Foster
President

Many thanks to all who voted on this issue's cover! The vote was close, and we doubly appreciate those of you who gave us feedback about why you voted as you did.



THE AMERICAN FEMINIST®

A publication of Feminists for Life of America

Editor-in-Chief/President **SERRIN M. FOSTER**

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Editorial Board **ANNEMARIE ARNOLD, CHERYL BLAKE, MADDIE DAVIN, SERRIN M. FOSTER, DAMIAN J. GEMINDER, CAROLINE JARBOE, CANDACE OTTO MACDONALD, JOYCE MCCAULEY-BENNER, MOLLY PANNELL, SUSAN SCHOPPA, SHARON SERRATORE, AND CYNTHIA J. WOOD**

Copy Editors **CHERYL BLAKE, ABIGAIL CHOE, DONNA HAYDEN FOSTER, CAROLINE JARBOE, COLETTE MORAN, MOLLY PANNELL, KATHRYN PLUTA, SUSAN SCHOPPA, SHARON SERRATORE, REBECCA WEBB, AND CYNTHIA J. WOOD**

Layout and Design **ALICE PAUL GROUP**

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FEMINISTS FOR LIFE OF AMERICA

PO BOX 151567, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22315

WWW.FEMINISTSFORLIFE.ORG

Tax-deductible donations may be given online at www.feministsforlife.org and www.women-deserve-better.com.

Established in 1972, Feminists for Life of America is a nonsectarian, nonpartisan, grassroots organization that seeks real solutions to the challenges women face. Our efforts are shaped by the core feminist values of justice, nondiscrimination, and nonviolence. Feminists for Life of America continues the tradition of early American feminists such as Susan B. Anthony, who opposed abortion.

Feminists for Life of America recognizes that abortion is a reflection that our society has failed to meet the needs of women. We are dedicated to systematically eliminating the root causes that drive women to abortion—primarily lack of practical resources and support—through holistic, woman-centered solutions. Women deserve better than abortion.

Feminists for Life of America is a 501(c)(3) organization. All donations are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

The opinions expressed in *The American Feminist* by individual authors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the policies, views, or beliefs of FFL’s Board of Directors, President, or *The American Feminist* editorial staff.

Fall/Winter 2022

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Life After Roe

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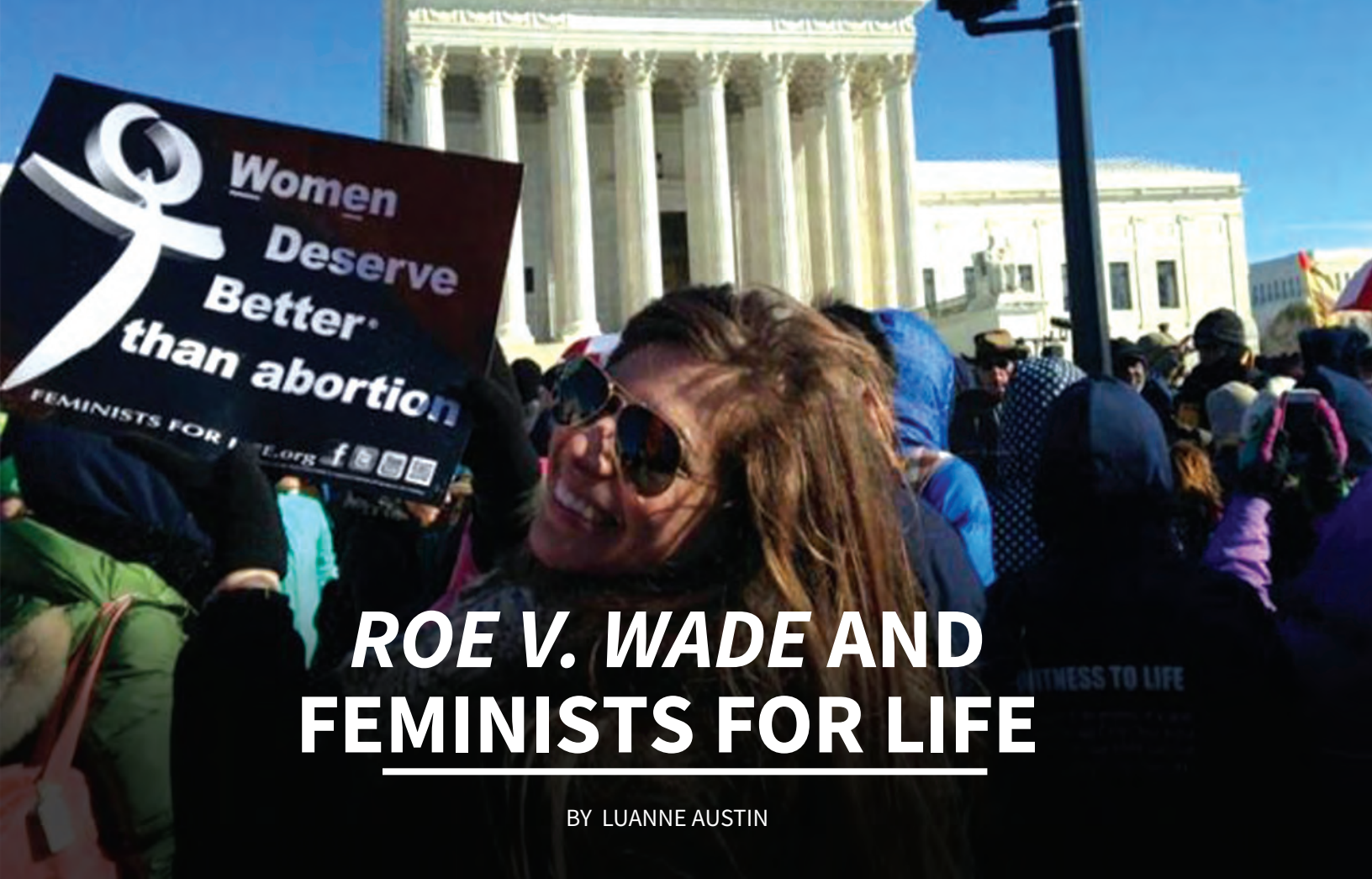
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WHEN A MAN STEALS TO SATISFY HUNGER, WE MAY SAFELY CONCLUDE THAT THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG IN SOCIETY—SO WHEN A WOMAN DESTROYS THE LIFE OF HER UNBORN CHILD, IT IS AN EVIDENCE THAT EITHER BY EDUCATION OR CIRCUMSTANCES SHE HAS BEEN GREATLY WRONGED.

—Mattie Brinkerhoff,
The Revolution, September 2, 1869





ROE V. WADE AND FEMINISTS FOR LIFE

BY LUANNE AUSTIN

What choices does a woman have?

Last week, when I received an email from Feminists for Life of America announcing the overturning of Roe vs. Wade, I was impressed with their continued care for and support of women with unexpected pregnancies:

“Now is the time to redouble our efforts to lovingly, peacefully reach past the angry voices to those who need help, who may not believe in themselves, who don’t yet know about WomenDeserveBetter.com, our helpsite—or that there are thousands of pregnancy resource centers who won’t take a dime, but give everything they can.”

Years ago, when Planned Parenthood’s former research arm, the Guttmacher Institute, revealed the list of reasons cited by women who had abortions — primarily lack of resources and support — FFL adopted it as their task list.

“Abortion is a reflection that we haven’t met the needs of women, and women deserve better,”

says Serrin Foster, president of FFL, based in Alexandria, Va.

It’s unfortunate, in this day and age, that the abortion debate is still so dualistic, so “this or that,” so either/or. As in, “either have the baby and ruin your life or have an abortion and move forward with your life.”

What kind of choice is that? Can’t we do better?

To be pro-woman means to listen to what women want, not tell them what to do. It means to encourage them to believe in themselves, and to offer support and resources.

Being pro-woman means not to force women to compete in the world as men. It means to let us function in the world as women.

Beyond the either/or debate, there is a third way. A holistic, woman-centered way.

Founded in 1972, FFL envisions and works toward a world in which campuses and workplaces support mothers in practical ways and don't force them to choose between their education or career plans and their children.

For instance, in 1994, FFL published the first-ever comprehensive pregnancy resource directory in the country. The self-help directory covered services in Washington, D.C., Virginia, and Maryland.

On International Women's Day 2018, FFL released their "Report on Resources and Support for Pregnant and Parenting Students at Highest Risk of Dropping out Attending California State Colleges and Universities," in advance of a vote that, if passed, would require California state colleges and universities to provide abortions by medications on campus.

FFL reviewed 33 school websites to determine their support for pregnant and parenting students. They evaluated on-campus child and infant care options, pregnant and parenting resources, lactation rooms, women's health services, on-campus family housing options, and online/hybrid and full degree programs—what pregnant and parenting students say they need.

FFL has published a "Recommendations for Best Practices at Colleges and Universities Serving Pregnant and Parenting Students," available on their website.

A Workplace Inventory published by FFL helps expectant and parenting moms to assess the supportiveness of their workplace. It's as easy as checking "have it," "need it" or "want it" beside each item.

Depending on the answers, a woman is encouraged to approach her boss or human resources director with concerns and proposed solutions. If the person taking the inventory is a business owner, CEO, or HR director, they're encouraged to approach their employees and ask for help in establishing a task force to address unmet needs.

FFL's website, womensdeservebetter.com offers tons of resources for moms, dads and their families.

When we say we are pro-choice or pro-life—the "angry voices" referred to in FFL's email—without providing viable choices, support and resources for pregnant and parenting women, it means that we care little for actual women and children and more about a political issue.

Angry voices often turn into violence. And we have seen where violence leads . ❏

Editor's Note: This article originally ran in the **Daily News-Record** on July 1, 2022, under the title "Roe V Wade And The FFL."



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POST-ROE AMERICA

BY JOYCE MCCAULEY-BENNER



How do we come together when we can't even see the same vision?
How do we talk to each other when we have only been silencing the other?
You are angry, afraid, and ready to fight.
I am hopeful, exhausted, but ready for change.
You see a 6, and I see a 9, and we are both right,
Until we walk to the other side.
Can we walk over to each other and see a different vision?
Maybe take your anger,
And my hope,
And yes, let the revolution rise up,
Not into a dystopian nightmare,
And not into a problematic past,
But instead a brand-new future,
Where it's not 6 or 9.
But ONE.



Imagine a square with a number in the middle of it. Two people stand on either end. When asked what number do you see, Person A says a 6 and Person B says a 9.

Who is right? Is either wrong?

No, not by their perspectives. But a fight ensues on either side as those standing next to them shout to the other why they are right.

Will the madness ever end?

The only way to convince the other is to first listen and walk around to see the other's perspective.

In post-Roe America, we cannot move forward until we acknowledge the various perceptions of our collective reality. We cannot give answers without giving credence to the questions.

Rooted in those questions is the persistence of fear. Fear of women losing their rights and their progress, fearing that other minority groups will face the same.

“

Feminists for Life has always offered the radical perspective of refusing to choose between women and children—we cannot move forward without acknowledging the interconnectedness of women and their unborn children.

”

In the abortion debate in America, the rights of the unborn have been pitted against the “right” of the woman to choose abortion.

This divide is long-standing and relentless. Feminists for Life has always offered the radical perspective of refusing to choose between women and children—we cannot move forward without acknowledging the interconnectedness of women and their unborn children.

The end goal has always been to meet the needs of women and make abortion *unthinkable*. When we acknowledge the interconnectedness of us all, we will come together to create resources and support that create a better world for everyone.

Yes, we acknowledge the fear. Unknown territory and change always bring apprehension. But now is the time to double down our efforts on getting past the rhetoric and start digging into the facts and the root issues.

Laws, while important, do not change hearts and minds. Connecting to each other and seeing the humanity in each other does.

Every person who sees the metaphorical 6, or the 9, has a reason for doing so.

Perhaps they have had a personal experience or are close to someone and your rejection of their belief seems like an attack on them.

Perhaps they have only heard one viewpoint by someone important to them and your challenge to *that* challenges their very foundation of whom to trust for truth.

Perhaps they have thought that everyone on the other side is a certain way, maybe judgmental, and so they have refused to listen.

When we can walk around to their viewpoint by asking why they believe what they do, we can get a sense of their humanity and personal experiences and listen before sharing our own.

We find the common ground first and we branch out from there.

Then we share our reality.

Our stories.

We present them non-judgmentally, recognizing the myriad of reasons and emotions in this most contentious issue.

But even without dialogue with the other side, when that seems impossible, we continue our work to build resources and support. We don't give up our dream of a society that values ALL and where abortion is unthinkable.

We do the work, knowing that the fruits of what we planted will nourish future generations.



\$100

“When a man steals to satisfy hunger, we may safely conclude that there is something wrong in society—so when a woman destroys the life of her unborn child, it is an evidence that either by education or circumstances she has been greatly wronged.”

GIVE NOW: feministsforlife.org/support



BUILDING BRIDGES AFTER ROE

BY REBECCA WEBB

When I was 4 years old, I watched in quiet wonder as my father pointed out a tiny human’s arms, movements, and beating heart on an ultrasound in the office where he provided medical care to low-income patients.

“Look, honey: That’s a baby in there!”

It is no exaggeration to say that I have been pro-life for literally as long as I can remember.

I was raised to view abortion as a human rights issue, just like hunger, poverty, and women’s suffrage. And just as my family wrote letters on behalf of unjustly detained prisoners, we advocated for legal protection for the littlest members of our society.

As I grew up and became a mother, my belief that abortion kills a human being did not change. However, I realized the answers to this tragedy are not as simple as I once thought.

When I faced the possibility of an unexpected pregnancy that would force me to drop out of

graduate school, I realized that sometimes the diapers and baby formula offered by pregnancy resource centers don’t come close to addressing the tremendous consequences that can come with an unplanned baby—and the obstacles facing women who hope to study *and* parent.

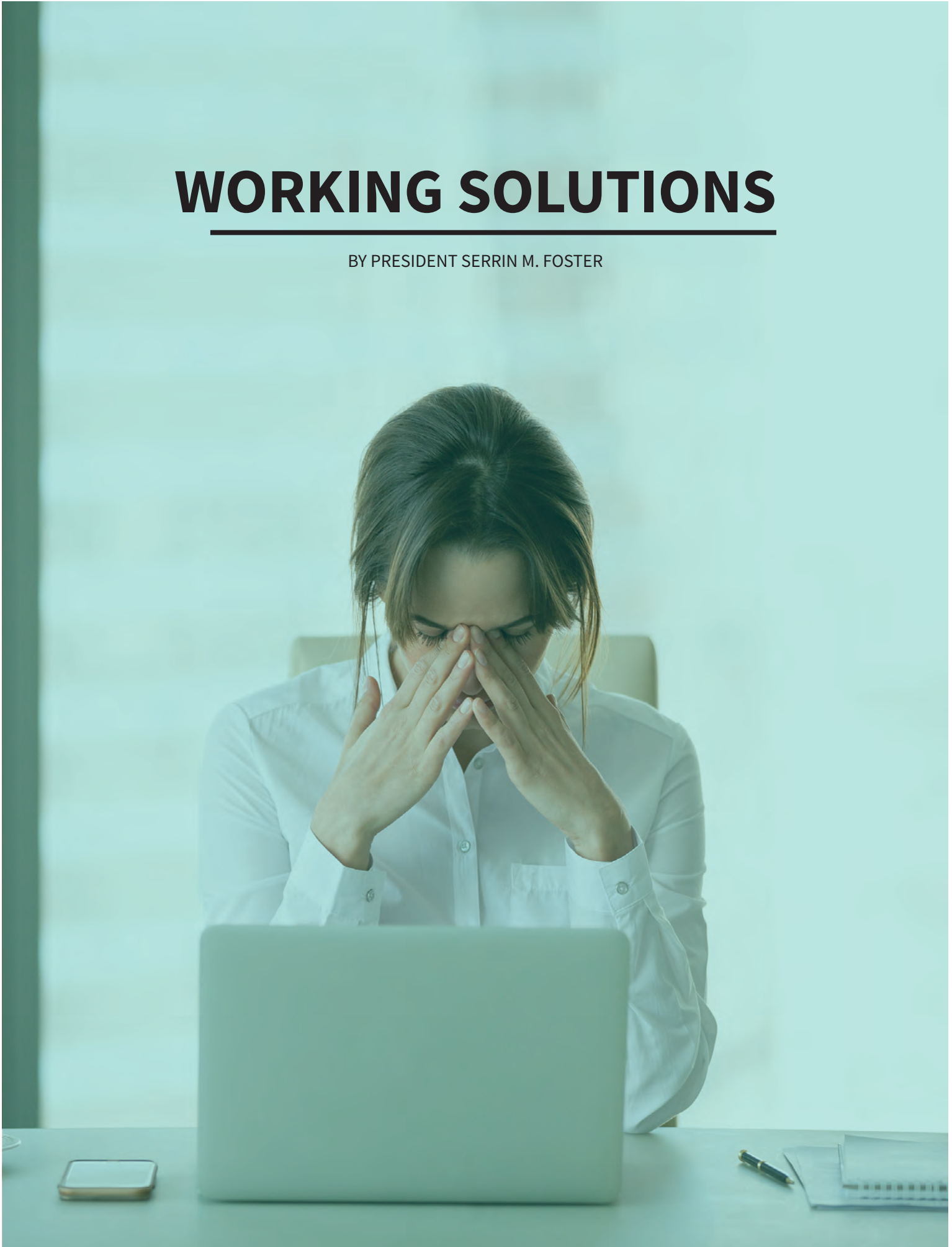
When my OB-GYN raised the possibility that my child might suffer birth defects at my 20-week appointment, I better understood the anguish a mother faces when told her child faces an uncertain future outside the womb—and the pressure she may face to terminate.

When I held my own babies moments after birth, I grasped for the first time why a woman might not be able to bring herself to choose the heartache that goes with adoption—even as she lacks the support to raise her child alone.

I am as pro-life as I ever was, but I understand where many pro-choice friends on my social media feed are coming from:

WORKING SOLUTIONS

BY PRESIDENT SERRIN M. FOSTER



She has a secret. She is pregnant and doesn't know how she is going to make it with less than a living wage. She looks around and doesn't see parents who are making it and who are struggling and wondering how it would be possible to raise a child and have a successful career. And the guy who said, "I love you," is now unsupportive. But since the *Dobbs* decision that overturned *Roe v. Wade*, her boss says they will fund her travel to an abortion clinic. Her supervisor declares, "We will support women's abortion 'care.'" But what about her choice to have children? Do they care about that? She doubts it.

Offering to pay for travel to obtain an abortion does nothing to answer the unmet needs of women. And now, there is new added pressure.

“

What woman wants to go to her boss or HR staff to disclose she is terminating the life of her child? Are they documenting it in her personnel record? Do they need receipts for the abortion as well as travel for reimbursement? Who in accounting gets access to this information? And if she is a government employee—or a college student—do these records follow her? So much for privacy.

”

What woman wants to go to her boss or HR staff to disclose she is terminating the life of her child? Are they documenting it in her personnel record? Do they need receipts for the abortion as well as travel for reimbursement? Who in accounting gets access to this information? And if she is a government employee—or a college student—do these records follow her? So much for privacy.

Many Feminists for Life are concerned about supporting companies that are funding travel to abortion destination states. Unfortunately, they include the largest of companies, from Airbnb to Zillow. Some of these companies also have very generous policies and resources for parents. But then we hear about stories of pregnant women forced to stand for long hours, lift heavy items, or have restricted restroom breaks. So, which one is it? Do these employers really believe that pregnant and parenting employees are worthy of support—or do they feel mothers are inconveniencing *them*?

Employees, just like students and their parents, need to look at policies before they are hired to know the culture of the company—and stay aware of evolving changes in the corporate culture and practices.



\$250

"If mothers only knew the natural consequences of abortion... they would stop awe-struck before committing the awful act."

GIVE NOW: feministsforlife.org/support

Working Solutions

There is no need to cave into desperation when we can demand and develop empowering options. Whether you are an employee or employer—human resource staff, policy advocate, or journalist—we can and will create a world where family comes first, and our careers are part of our success.

Women tell us that they need support in the workplace while pregnant and parenting. That includes those who tell us why they had abortions. As Feminists for Life, we continue to listen and respond with creative, holistic, women-centered solutions.

Years ago, Feminists for Life of America created a tool to help create a better work environment for pregnant women, expectant fathers, parents, and birthmothers. FFL's Workplace Inventory, found on our website under "Tools for Advocates," can help employees and employers come together to identify what is available and what is needed. Even smaller companies and nonprofits can find solutions. For some, it will be an onsite child care center, private lactation room, or even a cafeteria that welcomes families. For others, it will be telecommuting and scheduling meetings around the needs of doctors' appointments and school. Some may need temporary leave, while others may wish to go from full to part time. Where there is a problem, we can find solutions.

And we also invested in our helpsite, WomenDeserveBetter.com, with an entire section devoted to workplace solutions as well as those to help her Learn, Live, and Love better.

I have found throughout my career that most mothers are extremely focused when it comes to using their time well. There is little time for tangents. It is about getting the job done, done well, and getting home. Employers can support them in their efforts to remain productive contributors to the company, government, or nonprofit. It is a win-win situation.

A full list of companies supporting travel to abortion destinations can be found at **feministsforlife.org/termination-travel**. It is your choice to support these companies—or not.

To help lead the discussion in your workplace about pro-woman accommodations, please find FFL's Workplace Inventory at **feministsforlife.org/take-inventory-of-your-workplace**. It is your choice to actively support women and children.

Order your Women Deserve Better brochures for your place of employment (as well as counselors on campus, places of worship, women's centers, pregnancy resource centers, etc.) at our shops on **feministsforlife.org** or **WomenDeserveBetter.com**.

You can make a difference of a lifetime.

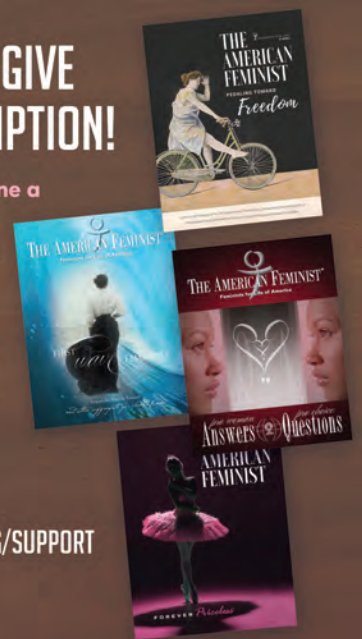


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REACH OUT TO PRO-LIFE STUDENT GROUPS— AND PREGNANT AND PARENTING STUDENTS

BY EDITOR DAMIAN J. GEMINDER

The COVID-19 pandemic made college from home a very unwelcome “new normal” for college students across the country for multiple semesters, and even after they were finally permitted back on campus, restrictive policies forbidding mass gatherings persisted. This made the logistics of on-campus organizing all but impossible: holding in-person meetings, tabling at club fairs, bringing in public speakers—all gone, for well more than a year.

These strictures were doubly devastating for student pro-life groups. Indeed, even before the world shut down in March 2020, collegians who openly stood up for life were regularly persecuted on campus, not just by school administrators but often by their own peers, including, but not limited to, hecklers and protests at events, displays and posters vandalized, and hostility from elected student government leaders. Speakers have been shouted down. Now, we see that the groups’ budgets are being cut.

This perfect storm of circumstances has left many of these groups in disarray, with some moribund or even outright disbanded. And even those groups that are still active have suffered from the chilling effects of on-campus hostility, especially after the United States Supreme Court *Dobbs v. Jackson* ruling overturned the *Roe* and *Casey* decisions.

Feminists for Life has seen this firsthand in our own College Outreach Program. FFL President Serrin M. Foster recently spoke at a virtual event for a prestigious women’s college where the campus culture was extremely resistant to pro-life activism. Prior to Serrin’s address, another pro-life speaker held an on-campus event that was panned by the student newspaper and multiple student-run social media accounts. We reached out to the student pro-life club in hopes that as feminists, our event could effectively help students reconsider abortion and redirect energy toward our shared mission of resources and support for the most vulnerable.

The virtual event did come to pass, and it went well: Those in attendance asked insightful questions and were grateful for Serrin’s time. But when we gave the club leaders our post-event survey afterward, they replied that FFL did not have permission to attribute their comments publicly. They fear for themselves now, and they fear for their future employment. (You will notice I have not named the school in question throughout this anecdote, out of respect for their wishes.)

In contrast to this event, audiences at past speaking events featured a mix of different opinions on abortion, but as a result of our presentation, students on both sides of the abortion divide collaborated on solutions.

It is especially troubling that these impediments to on-campus activism persist, because according to the Guttmacher Institute, the former research arm of Planned Parenthood, college-aged women make up 42% of those undergoing abortions in the United States—a plurality. FFL’s College Outreach Program has long proved to be an obstacle for abortion activists. After we launched it nearly three decades ago, Planned Parenthood’s newsletter, *INSider*, declared our program was “the newest and most challenging concept in anti-choice student organizing” and “could have a profound impact” on college campuses “as well as Planned Parenthood’s public education and advocacy efforts.” A decade later, only one group could boast a 30% decrease in abortions: once again, **college-educated women.**

As we and our fellow travellers in the pro-life movement have been quick to point out, overturning *Roe* and *Casey* did not outlaw abortion nationwide. Instead, it left the matter to the states. Although multiple states were quick not just to restrict abortion but to redouble support for mothers, many other states, in turn, went out of their way to make abortion as accessible as possible. And this is why our advocacy of resources and support is just as vital, if not more vital than ever, regardless of the law.

California is a perfect example: In 2019, legislation known as AB-809 inspired by FFL’s research unanimously passed the state legislature. The bill requires public postsecondary institutions to post on each institution’s

website and to provide to an expectant parent, through on-campus health clinics, notification of protections under Title IX for pregnant and parenting students. A supermajority of the legislature—including the bill’s chief sponsor—were abortion advocates, as was the governor who signed it into law. The bill’s fact sheet provided by that sponsoring assembly member cited FFL’s own research and recommendations. But both sides understood why this support was so vital: Abortion advocates saw it as pro-woman (in a true sense of being “pro-choice”), and those opposed to abortion knew this practical approach would help to reduce abortions in an otherwise politically and culturally hostile state.

“

It is essential that parents know what policies are in place at both the state and campus levels before sending their daughters—and sons—off on their own for the first time in their lives, as well as for the remainder of their academic careers.

”

But after taking this huge step forward, California took another step backward. That same year, the governor signed into law Senate Bill 24, which requires state schools to offer the abortion pill at on-campus health centers by the start of 2023. It is essential that parents know what policies are in place at both the state and campus levels before sending their daughters—and sons—off on their own for the first time in their lives, as well as for the remainder of their academic careers.

“Education from orientation, health services, policy classes, and more will include an emphasis on abortion, not accommodation. We can’t underestimate the effect

of the culture on the decision-making of a pregnant student,” Serrin says. “The pressure from the father of the child will be multiplied by a culture on campus from administrators to their peers. Even the U.S. government tried to go so far as to use tax dollars to help women cross state lines to procure abortions—in blatant violation of the Hyde Amendment—so students will not inconvenience the school with their children. They will also shove a bunch of chemical abortion pills at them to make ‘it’ go away.”

Picking up on Serrin’s point about peer pressure, the fall of *Roe* has served as a rallying cry—and subsequently a focal point of on-campus mobilization—for those students most committed to the pro-abortion cause. These groups not only increase hostility toward pro-life student groups but actively support increasing access to abortion and abortion referrals on college campuses. One student abortion advocacy group claimed a pre-*Dobbs* membership of 500 to 600, then gained 150 members and applicants overnight. By the end of summer break, their supporters sat at nearly 900 young people.

The president of one student council went so far as to declare that no funding would go to that university’s on-campus pro-life group. FFL immediately reached out offering to strategize and give the group whatever they needed.

There is a new generation to reach—and new needs to meet—as unsupported pregnant women feel forced to choose between school that will lift their family from poverty—and their children.

Here is why our newest class of interns chose to volunteer with Feminists for Life!



“I embrace a feminism that looks at a woman as a valuable human being and not just another opportunity for profit, a feminism that works to create life-affirming solutions for women and meets them where they are at with love and confidence in their strengths.”

—Kathryn Pluta



“I sought an organization that strives to support mothers nationwide with a key focus that every human life is invaluable. I wanted a team that could nurture my beliefs and strengthen my skills, for this issue was not something to weigh only on my shoulders. By entering FFL as an intern, I desired to join an effort much bigger than myself and pursue my passions on a much more effective and deeper level.”

—Abigail Choe

FFL will continue to offer free kits to these often underground and defunded groups; provide speakers; engage through social media; provide help through our helpsite, WomenDeserveBetter.com; and work with key stakeholders, including administrators, to host our Pregnancy and Parenting Resource ForumsSM.

It will be labor-intensive to find and reestablish groups. But this hard work will be well worth the investment, especially on campuses that are increasingly hostile to pro-life students—and making pregnant women feel unwelcome.

We *cannot* afford to lose this class of students, the future leaders in all areas. This school year is historic: the first *ever* post-Roe. **There is a new generation to reach—and new needs to meet—as unsupported pregnant women feel forced to choose between school that will lift their family from poverty—and their children.**

This will be hard work, but it can also be *joyful* work with the collaborative efforts of pro-woman, pro-life advocates both on and off campus, including you.

Whenever the cause for women and children faces setbacks, don't despair. Look at the big picture.

Who among us thought even a year ago that we would see the demise of Roe? Who among us a *half-century ago* thought that?

Roe's termination was not an endpoint but a pivot point. And this pivot behooves all of us to redouble (or retriuple, if we can) our mission of resources and support.

Join us—so that we might accompany her. ☐



More Tools for Schools are found under our resources page at feministsforlife.org, including:

- FFL's Pregnancy and Parenting Resource SurveySM
- FFL's Pregnancy and Parenting Resource ForumSM
- Recommendations for Best Practices at Colleges and Universities Serving Pregnant and Parenting Students
- And FREE kits for pro-woman, pro-life groups. (Campus leaders should contact info@feministsforlife.org to order.)

In addition, be sure to check out Campus Explorer's "Guide for Pregnant and Parenting College Students": www.campusexplorer.com/student-resources/pregnant-parenting-college-guide

What you can do:

- Check out the school website for euphemisms about "reproductive rights" before you or a teen applies for admission.
- If you are an alum, make sure you tell the administration you will not support the school if they promote abortion.
- If the school demonstrates support for pregnant women, parents, and adoptive mothers, make sure the school knows why you demonstrate your financial support.
- Donate a kit for the health center.
- Support a parent group.
- Connect the administration to Feminists for Life of America for help developing policies, identify resources and support on and off campus, and clearly communicate a central office for assistance and constantly communicate what is available via orientation, website, health center brochures, etc.
- Connect local pregnancy resource center staff to health center staff—or better yet, encourage them to host an FFL Pregnancy and Parenting Resource Forum.

FOREVER PRICELESS: GIRLS DESERVE BETTER

BY PRESIDENT SERRIN M. FOSTER

In 2020, the FFL Board of Directors recognized that we need to reach teens earlier, before they reach college, to provide them with a foundation of pro-life philosophy, first wave feminist history, powerful messages, and pro-woman solutions.

Since then, we have developed a new **kit for pro-life high school groups**, a **Feminist History Course and Quiz** for parents and teens alike, and **videos for assemblies**, club meetings, and homeschoolers.

More recently, we developed a popular line of **Girls Deserve Better merchandise and Forever Priceless gear** to get these messages out.

Issues of our important issue of *The American Feminist*, “**Forever Priceless**,” are also available.

This past spring, FFL was awarded the registration mark from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, which led to our attaining a new place for teens on [instagram.com/girlsdeservebetter](https://www.instagram.com/girlsdeservebetter).





During the summer, we launched our NEW Girls Deserve Better® Instagram page to help us “protect our daughters,” featuring FFL’s Chair of the Board Kara Sorensen in **six new videos!** She is SO telegenic, and the big sister that every parent would wish for her or his teen.

FFL Speaker and content contributor Joyce McCauley-Benner has **six more videos talking to parents** on FFL’s social media. As you know, Joyce is an expert on these issues as someone who has personally worked with trafficking victims on the ground. Look for the new series on Forever Priceless™ Fridays!

Meanwhile, we are sharing empowering messages to **help teens build their story on Instagram:** You are Forever Priceless: Girls Deserve Better! Pass it forward. ☐

Editor’s Note: FOREVER Priceless™ is a trademark and Girls Deserve Better® is a registered trademark of Feminists for Life of America.





WE REMEMBER: KEISHA ATKINS (1993-2017)

BY CHERYL BLAKE

We don't know why Keisha Atkins decided six months into her pregnancy to seek an abortion. Maybe she lost—or never had—the support of the father. Maybe she lost a job. Perhaps she lost faith in herself. Something changed. We do know that she was on Medicaid so she was, like most women seeking abortion, among the poorest in the country.

According to the Guttmacher Institute, the former research arm of Planned Parenthood, three out of four women who undergo abortions are the poor or working poor. Indeed, nearly half live under the federal poverty line.

We do know that Keisha died at a hospital in New Mexico. She trusted a university hospital and the clinic to which they referred her for an abortion. She died during an emergency operation to try to save her after complications from that abortion and a 10-hour attempt by personnel in the clinic to ameliorate her condition. She may have died in a hospital, but what led to her death occurred in an abortion clinic.

Although federal funds cannot help pay for most abortions, state funds in some states can, including New Mexico. Keisha and her unborn child's deaths occurred following a procedure likely at least partially publicly funded.

At about six months' gestation, she was referred by the University of New Mexico (UNM) Hospital to an Albuquerque clinic, Southwestern Women's Options (SWO). There, Keisha underwent an induction abortion and subsequently died of sepsis, according to the lawyers who sued UNM and SWO for negligence and malpractice.

A doctor at SWO began the four-day procedure by injecting the baby with a chemical which causes death. This process would lead to Keisha's delivering a stillborn child within a few days. Typically, this kind of procedure is performed in a hospital setting because most insurance companies will not cover it if performed in a clinic, but SWO specialized in late-term abortions and provided UNM with resultant body parts for research.

We Remember: Keisha Atkins

This relationship between the referring hospital and SWO led to an investigation by the U.S. House of Representatives.

Keisha may have been unaware that the clinic was investigated for Medicaid fraud. Nor is it likely that she was informed of the dangers associated with this type of late-term abortion, because there were no disclosure requirements. In addition, she could only afford the procedure because Dr. Shannon Clark designated her pregnancy as life-threatening on mental health grounds—ensuring Medicaid would cover it.

However, Dr. Clark admitted under oath that she had no mental health training. Keisha was seen by no psychologist or psychiatrist who could diagnose her state of mind. It was basically Medicaid fraud, for which the clinic has been sued by other clients.

Keisha's mother and sister initiated a lawsuit against Southwestern Women's Options and the UNM Hospital for wrongful death. Their legal team argued that there were questionable conclusions in the autopsy report, and the 911 transcript suggested that an ambulance was indeed called but it was later cancelled by the clinic, possibly delaying lifesaving treatment. Rather than listing the abortion as resulting in sepsis secondary to the abortion procedure, the cause of death was blamed on pregnancy complications.

During surgery to save her life, Keisha suffered from a blood clot in her lung and cardiac arrest. It was actually during surgery to complete the abortion that Keisha died. The medical examiner said that Keisha had a uterus that had become septic during the process of the chemical abortion. Her death, however, was attributed on her death certificate to a blood clot caused by the pregnancy in an otherwise healthy young woman with good medical support.

As dangerous as the late-term induction procedure can be, SWO told Keisha to return to the clinic with any medical problems, instead of going to an emergency room. The young woman did return to the clinic experiencing breathing problems and running a fever.

It was after 10 hours of unsuccessful intervention—only then—that SWO called the ambulance, which they later cancelled. Keisha did eventually get to the ER by unknown means. She died a short time later during emergency surgery.

Years later, the wrongful death suit finally led to a settlement with Keisha's estate of \$365,000—to be paid by the state since UNM is a state institution.

Keisha underwent a dangerous procedure at a facility ill-equipped to safely support her when her condition deteriorated. When she finally got to the hospital, it was too late to save her. A young woman with a promising life ahead of her lost that life: she just four months shy of her 24th birthday and her child at 24 weeks. Keisha's mother and sister did receive some compensation, but that cannot replace Keisha, nor her unborn baby. Nothing can. □



\$500

“Can you not see that the idea is to educate women that they may be self-reliant, self-sustaining, self-respected?... God speed the time, for the sake of the babies. Little ones will then be welcome...”

GIVE NOW: feministsforlife.org/support

Check out the latest from our helpsite, **WomenDeserveBetter.com!**



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Abortion advocates
say they speak for
women.

**They don't speak
for me.**

We are Feminists **FOR** Life
and proud to walk in the
footsteps of our feminist
foremothers.