

## ESSAYS: THIRD PLACE

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Imagine being denied your bodily autonomy rights which harms your psychological and economic well-being. Having accessible and legal services to essential healthcare saves lives everyday. Otherwise, people will have to resort to other measures. Abortions should be legal everywhere because women who don't have access to safe abortions are negatively impacted in every aspect of their life, having access to legal abortions reduces crime, and denying abortions is about having control and power over the people who need them.

Abortions should be legal everywhere because having access to safe abortions negatively affects the people who are pregnant in every aspect of their life. According to a University of California at San Francisco study, people unable to obtain abortions were more likely to stay in a relationship with an abusive partner than people who had an abortion, and were more than twice as likely to become victims of domestic violence. People who are denied abortions are more likely to become unemployed, to be on public welfare, to be below the poverty line, and to become victims of domestic violence. Not only that, women who receive abortions are less likely to suffer mental health problems than women who are denied abortions. There are much greater physical health risks of carrying a pregnancy to term and giving birth than there are of having a safe abortion, even a later one. Imagine your daughter at 15 became pregnant. The circumstances of how are now irrelevant. Having to carry it to full term would completely alter the rest of her life. She may not be able to go to college, she could end up resenting her child. She may not have the resources or be prepared for a child. People can say it is the consequence of your own actions, but is it really worth it to let one event reshape the rest of your entire life, that as far as most believe, we only have one. This shows that the lack of obtainability to safe abortions will ruin women's lives.

Abortions should be legal everywhere because having access to legal abortions reduces crime. According to Abortion Worldwide 2017: Guttmacher, from 2010 to 2014, the number of abortions that happened in countries where abortion is illegal was nearly identical to countries where it is legal: 37 versus 34 abortions each year per 1,000 women. This shows people will seek abortions whether it's legal or not. *What changes is how many of them will die from it.* Because these don't happen in a doctor's office. They happen at home, in back alley clinics. According to a study co-written by Freakonomics co-author Steven D. Levitt, PhD, around 18 years after abortion was legalized, crime rates began to drop abruptly, and crime rates dropped earlier in states that allowed abortion earlier. Because "women who have abortions are those most at risk to give birth to children who would engage in criminal activity," and women who had control over the timing of childbearing were more likely to raise children in optimal environments, so crime is reduced when there is access to legal abortion.

Abortions should be legal everywhere because denying abortions is about having control and power over the people who need them. Of course, the rich will always have access to safe abortions.

They can fly somewhere where it's legal or pay extra money to circumvent the law. They want poor people to stay poor. They want to keep them trapped in the cycle of poverty that greases the engine of capitalism with no regard for how many people die in the process. Abortion stigmas are rooted in white supremacy and fear. 77% of anti-abortion leaders are cisgender men. 100% of them will never get pregnant. They will never be put in a circumstance where they have to make that decision, so they can easily make those decisions for women, without it directly affecting them at all. 76% pro-"life" states are pro-death penalty. Abortions are being banned before assault rifles. 250+ mass shootings in the U.S. alone and a woman's body is more regulated than a gun. If this was about babies, there would be universal healthcare, free education, and free daycare. Unfortunately, this isn't about babies because again if it was, 192 Republicans wouldn't have voted against providing \$28 million in aid to address the baby formula shortage. It's not about the sanctity of life. It was never about life; it's about power and control. Stop taking rights away for our own bodily autonomy.

Some people will say that it's hurting the embryo. Pro-"lifers" can say they feel pain, even though scientific consensus tells us that until at least 24 weeks, a fetus cannot feel anything like pain because they do not yet have the brain connections to do so. Less than 1% of abortions are after 24 weeks, but all are unsafe and are only being done because of urgency and lack of accessibility to safe abortions. If abortions were made legal and everyone had access to them, then there would not be this problem. If you were aborted, you wouldn't have even known what life is. You wouldn't even know you existed, therefore, it does not affect you. The issue is that it doesn't matter when life begins. It doesn't matter whether a fetus is a human being or not. That entire argument is a red herring, a distraction, a subjective and unwinnable argument by either side that could not matter less. It doesn't matter if we're talking about a fertilized egg, a fetus, a baby, a five year old, or a teacher. Nobody has the right to use your body, against your will, even to save their life, or the life of another person. That's it. That's the argument. You cannot be forced to donate blood, or marrow, or organs, even though thousands die every year, on waiting lists. They cannot even harvest your organs after your death without your explicit, written, pre-mortem permission. Denying women the right to abortion means they have less bodily autonomy than a corpse.

Some people could say, "Why don't you just put it up for adoption?" Have you ever given birth? Childbirth complications include eclampsia, cardiomyopathy, sepsis, embolism, transfusions, heart attack, respiratory distress, shock, and anesthesia complications occurring within a certain window surrounding delivery. About 700 women die each year in the U.S. as a result of pregnancy or delivery complications. And once again, abortion stigmas are rooted in white supremacy; American Indian/Alaska Native and Black women are two to three times as likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than white women. Not only that, you're saying there's "forced birth in a country where there are 400,000+ children in foster care at significantly higher risk of being abused, neglected, and experiencing mental and physical problems," -impact.

In conclusion, abortions should be legal everywhere because pregnant people who don't have access to safe abortions are negatively impacted in every aspect of their life, having access to legal abortions reduces crime, and denying abortions is about having control and power over the people who need them. If you wanted to actually reduce the amount of abortions happening then the policies that should be put in place are accessibility to free contraceptives, comprehensive sex education, universal health care, paid family leave, welfare funding, ending housing insecurity,

closing the wage gap, and funding education. And if you only support abortions when it is a cause of incest or rape, you are confirming that for a woman to have a right to her body, someone else has to violate it first. Fetuses are infringing on the carrier's bodily autonomy. This is detrimental. Abortion is basic health-care.

Topic: Abortions Should Be Legal Everywhere.

Claim: Pregnant people who don't have access to safe abortions are negatively impacted in every aspect of life.

Claim: Having access to legal abortions reduces crime.

Claim: Denying abortions is about having control and power over the people who need them.

Rebuttal: Some say it's murder/ unethical.

Rebuttal: Why not just give it up for adoption?

Conclusion: Abortions should be legal everywhere.

Resources:

<https://abortion.procon.org/>

<https://www.guttmacher.org/report/abortion-worldwide-2017> "Abortions occur as frequently in the two most-restrictive categories of countries (banned outright or allowed only to save the woman's life) as in the least-restrictive category (allowed without restriction as to reason)—37 and 34 per 1,000 women, respectively."

<https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2019/05/414551/more-states-restrict-abortions-research-points-negative-health-outcomes-women> "We find large economic differences: the women who are denied are more likely to live in poverty, less likely to be fully employed, more likely to report that they don't have enough money basic living expenses, compared to women who have received an abortion."

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/features/abortion-restrictions-health-implications/>

[https://www.mdch.state.mi.us/osr/abortion/Tab\\_US.asp](https://www.mdch.state.mi.us/osr/abortion/Tab_US.asp)

<https://www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/politics/a19748134/what-is-abortion/> “They can pretend they feel pain, even though scientific consensus tells us that until at least 24 weeks, a fetus cannot feel anything like pain because they do not yet have the brain connections to do so.”

<https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternal-mortality/disparities-pregnancy-related-deaths/info-graphic.html>