



# THE AMERICAN FEMINIST<sup>®</sup>

**Feminists for Life of America**

Pro Woman  
Answers  
to  
Pro Choice  
Questions

# THE AMERICAN FEMINIST®

Feminists for Life of America

"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



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Feminists for Life of America, 733 15th Street, NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20005; 202-737-3352; [www.feministsforlife.org](http://www.feministsforlife.org). **President** Serrin M. Foster **Vice President** Sally A. Winn

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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.

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what about rape?

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## how dare you call yourself a feminist?

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FOR OVER A DECADE, I have been fielding hard questions. Even before I joined FFL, people couldn't accept that I was both pro-woman and pro-life.

It is so easy to get caught up in unproductive arguments that pit women against children. I am often asked how I can stay calm and noncombative when verbal attacks are posed as questions.

We must see the humanity of every person who challenges us. Look at the question from the perspective of a person who embraces "choice." See the pain of the woman who was abandoned by those she counted on the most and was driven to abortion. Understand the well-meaning friend who offers a quick fix, not realizing that pain cannot be diminished through abortion. Grasp the embarrassment of a parent who wants to protect a daughter from a grandchild who might "ruin her life." Feel the fear of a young man who is suddenly faced with fatherhood, and realizes that he is totally unprepared. Recognize the betrayal behind questions from those under age 30 who have never known a day without legalized abortion.

Acknowledge them while offering unwavering hope that we can work together for better outcomes for women and children.

Every choice has a story. Thirty years after Roe, we mourn our missing children alongside women who feel betrayed.

Increasingly, the hard questions are being redirected at abortion advocates whose unfulfilled promises have left us with over 40 million missing and more than 25 million women suffering in silence. Let them be silent no more, and let us be willing to listen.



Serrin M. Foster  
President  
Feminists for Life



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who are **you** to tell  
**me** what to do?

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# Remember the Woman

**Margaret Colin**  
**Actor and Honorary Co-Chair**

**I**T IS A SPECIAL HONOR FOR ME to be with you here to talk directly to those who have a huge impact on the lives of women and speak on a subject I am passionate about and have been involved with since my mother helped to form the New York State Right to Life Party. We marched here to support all women and protest the violence against them, legislated by *Roe v. Wade*.

In just six short months we will mark the 30th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. And while many will remember the 40 million American children that were never born, I want us to also remember the 25 million women and girls in America today who have personally experienced an abortion.

I want you to remember a 13-year-old African-American named Dawn Ravenell, who skipped junior high one January day in 1985 to have an abortion. She died three weeks later having never regained consciousness from this legal procedure. Which part of safe, legal and rare would this be?

I want you to put yourself in the shoes of Marion Syversen, who was raised in a very abusive environment. At age 15, she sought assistance from a local church when she found herself pregnant. Instead of help, Marion was handed \$150, so she thought that God wanted her to have an abortion. She wanted to have her baby—where were the resources to rescue her from that abusive family? We let her down. We didn't give her a place to go, a phone number to call, a safe haven. We could have saved her from the abusive situation and helped her to make choices about her pregnancy. Is abortion the best we could do for her?

I want you to remember Guadalupe Negron, who sought an abortion at age 33 because she thought her husband would not be able to afford another child. After infection set in, one limb after another was amputated until she died leaving her husband and four children motherless. Didn't she have a right to know assistance is available for women in exactly this situation?

And as you revisit the issue of partial-birth abortion, I want you to put yourself in the place of a woman who hoped that if she hid the pregnancy long enough she would have been protected from abortion legally and found the support she needed. But instead she experiences three days of forced labor, risks her future fertility, and while she is awake, fully realizes what is happening to her baby. How does this help her?

Imagine the desperation of a woman so terrified of what her boyfriend, parents, employer, or school will do or not do to support her that she is willing to swallow poison, RU-486. And after three or four visits to a clinic, comes face to face with a recognizable fetus as she aborts at home, at work, in her dorm or doubles over in a grocery store. How is this good medicine?

We mourn our missing children with these women. And we remember the women who have been rendered infertile or died from legal but lethal abortion.

This is violence against women. This is the failure of medicine to help and heal. This is the failure of our American society to help and protect women. We need to address the reasons that women seek abortions, to help them find the resources that are available to ease their situations, and coordinate the resources nationwide. Politically, women have always sought to address the root causes. This isn't news. The early American feminists who fought for our right to vote, fought for the rights of pregnant women—for society to change to accept them, not for them to change to be accepted by society.

As my friend, Emmy winner and Honorary Chair of Feminists for Life, Patricia Heaton, has said, "Women who are experiencing an unplanned pregnancy also deserve to experience unplanned joy."

This year, remember the woman. Become her voice. And help us redirect this debate by focusing on solutions—because women deserve better. ○

*Born and raised in New York, Margaret Colin has an impressive history of roles in television, theatre and film. Her credits include "Three Men and a Baby," "Independence Day," "The Butcher's Wife," "The Devil's Own," "Unfaithful," "Blue Car," and "First Daughter." Margaret has also portrayed Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis in "Jackie," a hit Broadway show. She has appeared in several television series, including "Chicago Hope," "Foley Square," "Now and Again," "Madigan Men," "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit" and "Law & Order: Criminal Intent" and the made-for-television movies "Familiar Stranger," "The Wedding Dress," "Swing Vote" and "Remembering Charlie." Margaret became FFL's Honorary Co-Chair in 1999 and has spoken out for life on several occasions, including testifying before Congress against research on human cloning. She delivered this address at a Congressional briefing on July 14, 2002.*

# mission

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.

## Talking Points

- Abortion is a reflection that we have not met the needs of women. Women deserve better.®
- We need to systematically eliminate the root causes of abortion—primarily lack of practical resources and emotional support.
- Refuse to choose.® Refuse to choose between women and children. Refuse to choose between sacrificing our education and career plans and sacrificing our children.
- Our body. Our choice. Our problem.®
- No woman deserves to have an abortion.
- No compassionate person wants a woman to suffer through the personal tragedy of abortion.
- Abortion advocates pit women against children. Lack of resources and support are the real enemies.
- As women, we need to love and empower each other and ourselves.
- Never underestimate the ingenuity of women.
- We refuse to give up on women.
- Abortion is a last resort, not a free choice.
- Abortion hurts women.

For more information, go to FFL's website, [www.feministsforlife.org](http://www.feministsforlife.org). There you can find:

Pro-life feminist history  
Back issues of FFL's magazine  
*The American Feminist* on  
a variety of topics

FFL President Serrin Foster's speech, "The Feminist Case *Against* Abortion," which is included in *Women's Rights: Great Speeches in History* edited by Jennifer Hurley (Greenhaven Press, 2001) and *The Cost of "Choice": Women Evaluate the Impact of Abortion* edited by Erika Bachiochi (Encounter Books, 2004)



Serrin M. Foster  
President

# hard cases



## What about rape?

### What if it was your daughter who was raped?

I would love her and my grandchild unconditionally, and I would do everything in my power to prosecute the perpetrator to the fullest extent of the law.

Out of our desire to save someone from suffering, it is normal to wish we could erase a painful memory such as rape. Unfortunately, the hard truth is that as much as we want to, we can't.

Abortion doesn't erase a memory. Think about it. Could anything ever erase your memory of September 11, 2001?

Abortion is a second act of violence against a woman who is raped. At one of my lectures, a Vanderbilt medical student told other students that her "abortion was worse than the rape."

Both victims—the woman and her child—deserve our unconditional support.

One student at a midwestern university who was raped by her third cousin and became pregnant said she would never pass on the violence that was perpetrated against her to her own unborn child. Now *that* is the strength of a woman!

Pregnancy is not a punishment. Julie Makimaa's mother ("Victory Over Violence," *The American Feminist*, vol. 5, no. 3) told her that she was the "only good thing to come out of the rape."

# Did I deserve the death penalty?

# tough

My "crime" was being conceived through rape. So the next time

### \* Stay Focused

Keep the focus on eliminating the reasons that drive women to abortion — primarily, lack of practical resources and emotional support. Both sides can come together and find real solutions when we look at women's needs.

When someone asks about exceptions for rape and incest, we must think of how that makes those feel who were conceived through sexual assault. Well-meaning statements can hurt. As one Berkeley grad student said to her pro-choice peers, "I have a *right* to be here."

Can you imagine if we ranked the value of people based on the circumstances of their conception? We don't discriminate based on parentage—that's not equality! You are valuable no matter who your parents are, no matter the circumstances of your conception.

Could you look at someone conceived in violence and tell her she never should have been born? Rebecca Kiessling, a young attorney and mother who was conceived through sexual assault, asks, "Did I deserve the death penalty?" People used to value a woman based on who her father or husband was. It is similarly medieval to value a child by the actions of her father. That way of thinking is patriarchal and anti-feminist, and it should have gone out with the Dark Ages.

We need comprehensive support for rape victims who become pregnant. Did you know that in most states the rapist still has paternal rights and even if convicted can demand visitation from jail? Did you know that if the rape victim is poor and can't prove the paternity of the father, she could have problems collecting welfare benefits? We should ask women who conceive through rape how to help them in the long term, and help their children as well.

Abortion after rape is misdirected anger. It doesn't punish the perpetrator of the crime.

Feminists for Life is a proud supporter of the Violence Against Women Act. Our priority is keeping women safe. Incarcerated sexual offenders should not be allowed pornography, barbells, and early parole. We need harsh sentences for sexual assault without possibility of parole.

### **Aren't you condemning women to back-alley abortions? How can you say you are pro-life when you are willing to put women's health back into the hands of butchers?**

No one wants that. It isn't a choice between legal and illegal abortion. Women need viable nonviolent choices—marital or single parenthood and adoption options—with support that women want, need and deserve. Women shouldn't settle for less.

### **What about "the life of the mother"?**

Since we are both pro-woman and pro-life, we refuse to choose between women and children. Sometimes doctors advise abortion because they are unaware of other options or because they are pressured by fear of malpractice suits. We believe that physicians and other medical personnel should treat both patients and do what they can to save both lives. This is what was done before the *Roe* decision was handed down. Thankfully, medical advancements continue to save more lives.

Situations in which the pregnancy threatens the life of the mother are extremely rare. Late-term abortions are never medically necessary, despite the claims of abortion advocates! Emergency C-sections are often the medically appropriate response to save both mother and child. Viability at this stage of the child's development is generally very good, especially with advances in neonatal care. Babies who weigh just under a pound are surviving!

e

# n questions

you hear people talking about "exceptions" to abortion for rape and incest, think of me. **I am that exception.**

*Rebecca Kiessling*

# THEY SAY I HAVE A FREE CHOICE

As for first-trimester scenarios, most are to save the mother from ectopic pregnancies. Since the child has no chance of survival, and the mother can survive if the pregnancy is ended, we must do what we can to save her. To let both die would not be pro-life. At this time uterine transplants to re-implant the baby into the womb are not possible. (But if this becomes a viable option, it would have enormous ramifications for the entire abortion debate, since becoming un-pregnant would not be the same as having an abortion!)

While pregnancy can be a stressful experience and sometimes bring on or exacerbate depression, psychological stress should not be “treated” by abortion. Psychiatrists and psychologists need to treat mental health issues directly.

A two-year study on abortion revealed that out of 400 women who had an abortion at a Buffalo, New York, clinic, women who suffered from clinical depression were twice as likely to regret their abortion (30% versus 15%). This surprised doctors who assumed that pregnancy and motherhood would exacerbate their depression. In addition, several large studies (in Finland, Great Britain, Canada and the U.S.) indicate a link between abortion and suicide and psychiatric admissions.

Finally, more medical research must be dedicated to pregnant women who are faced with life-or-death situations, and alternatives must be found to drugs and other therapies that result in complications for the woman or child. In addition, ongoing education must be provided to physicians about alternative care. Meanwhile, we encourage physicians to adhere to the original Hippocratic oath, which rejects abortion, and return to the treatment of both patients.

**I agree that we should do what we can to reduce the number of abortions and provide resources for women, but why should we make it illegal? It's still a woman's body. It should still be her choice.**

Have we learned nothing? We cannot overcome injustice against women by subjecting our children to injustice.

The last time we advocated “choice” was in an effort to justify declaring an entire population as sub-human. Now the rhetoric of “choice” is no longer used against African-Americans but against our children.

Becoming the new bully in society doesn't make us equal, it makes us as unjust as those who have gone subjugating populations before us.

As for it being her body, we have other laws against prostitution, illegal drugs and suicide to protect people's bodies. Just as the early suffragists wanted to protect women from abortion, we, too, want to see all women legally protected from the physical and emotional scars of abortion. ○

**But without housing**

**on campus for me and my baby,**

**without on-site day care,**

**without maternity coverage in my**

**health insurance,**

**it sure doesn't seem like I have**

**much of a choice.**





### **What if her partner, friends or family abandoned her?**

Lack of support often coerces women into abortion. As pro-life feminists, we choose to support and empower women rather than abandon women.

A woman who is pregnant needs to know that there are perfect strangers who will care for her even if the people she counts on the most have let her down. She needs information about child support laws that prohibit coercion by the father either by physical force or by threats to withhold child support.

Universities should support marital and single parenting choices as well as adoption options. Feminists for Life's College Outreach Program focuses on resources—housing, child care, maternity coverage in student health care, telecommuting options, financial aid, etc.—so women aren't forced to choose between sacrificing their education or career and sacrificing their children.

### **What if she is poor?**

We do not eliminate poverty by eliminating poor women's children. It is degrading to poor women to expect or imply that their children aren't welcome. We believe that poor women deserve the same support and life-affirming alternatives as wealthy women.

A woman who is pregnant needs to know that there are pregnancy care centers listed in the "abortion alternatives" section of the yellow pages that provide direct assistance and coordinate public and private assistance.

Abortion is not an enriching experience. An abortion won't get her a better job or get her out of a bad (for example, abusive) situation.

**you're not alone**



*a n y m o r e*

**If you're pregnant and don't feel like you have**

**much of a choice, call these people.**

**They don't want your money, they just want to help.**

**They'll stand by you when no one else will.**

**Birthright: 800-550-4900**  
***birthright.org***

**Care Net: 800-395-HELP**  
***care-net.org***

**Catholic Charities: 800-CARE-002**  
***catholiccharitiesusa.org***

**Heartbeat International: 888-550-7577**  
***heartbeatinternational.org***

**Life Center: 800-848-LOVE**  
***nationallifecenter.com***

**Nurturing Network: 800-TNN-4MOM**  
***nurturingnetwork.org***

**what-ifs**



**What if she just doesn't want it?**

It's more complicated than that. We can address each of her concerns working together for peaceful solutions.

Alan Guttmacher Institute statistics show that there are reasons, often financial or emotional, why a woman feels she must have an abortion. We must work towards the systematic elimination of the reasons that coerce women into an abortion.

We oppose abortion in all cases because violence is a violation of basic feminist principles.

Adoption is one way to affirm the early feminists' position on voluntary motherhood. If a woman chooses not to parent, there are a variety of adoption options that she can explore (open or closed, direct or indirect updates with photos). She should know, for example, that agencies in some states offer more comprehensive benefits (for example, compensation for lost scholarships, housing and other living expenses, health care, moving expenses, etc.) to birth mothers.

**What if she has every resource and all the support and still doesn't want it?**

We don't always know at the beginning how things will turn out. Many women report that their feelings change throughout the pregnancy.

Two-time Emmy award winner and FFL's Honorary Chair Patricia Heaton said, "Women experiencing an unplanned pregnancy also deserve unplanned joy."

Feminism demands justice for all, especially those most vulnerable.

Women are capable of overcoming the unexpected, and making nonviolent choices. We need to support their life-affirming choices—including adoption options as well as marital or single parenthood. ○

*“Women experiencing an unplanned pregnancy also deserve unplanned joy.”*

*Patricia Heaton  
Two-time Emmy winner and  
FFL Honorary Chair*

# you're a feminist?

## **You are anti-woman.**

Abortion is a reflection that we have failed women—and women have settled for less.

We insist on a world in which women have access to all nonviolent options, which is hardly an anti-woman perspective. Think about the consequences of such a world for the workplace, schools, etc. We encourage woman-centered and parenting-friendly policies including distance learning, which allows a new mom to be with her child while continuing her education and saving on child-care costs; affordable family housing near campus; campus and workplace child care; health care plans for students and employees that include maternity coverage; telecommuting and job sharing; a living wage; and child support when one parent is absent, etc. We have to approach this holistically.

Pro-life feminists demand that society support the unique life-giving capacity of women, so that no woman feels she has no choice other than abortion.

## **You want to criminalize women.**

The early feminists enacted laws against abortion as consumer protection for women.

FFL has never advocated prosecuting women seeking abortion, although we believe that women are capable of following the law. Why doesn't the law hold accountable those

who threaten or coerce a woman into an abortion by withholding financial resources and emotional support? Abandonment is a powerful form of coercion.

We should criminalize anyone who withholds child support, fires a woman from her job because she is pregnant, refuses to accommodate her pregnancy, expels her from school, or threatens violence—any act that

forces her to choose between sacrificing her child and sacrificing her education, career plans, or safety from violence.

We believe that we should hold responsible those who profit from women's pain—especially the abortion industry.

Most importantly, we need to jump into hyperdrive to provide resources and solutions that will support women.

*continued on p. 14*



another  
anti-choice  
fanatic

**"Sweeter even than  
to have had the  
joy of caring for  
children of my  
own has it been to  
me to help bring  
about a better  
state of things for  
mothers generally,  
so their unborn  
little ones could  
not be willed away  
from them."**

*Susan B. Anthony*

**The woman who fought  
for the right to vote also fought  
for the right to life.  
We proudly continue her legacy.**

# P R O W O M A N



*Susan B. Anthony*

In her publication, *The Revolution*, was written:

**"Guilty? Yes. No matter what the motive, love of ease, or a desire to save from suffering the unborn innocent, the woman is awfully guilty who commits the deed. It will burden her conscience in life, it will burden her soul in death; but oh, thrice guilty is he who...drove her to the desperation which impelled her to the crime!"**

Abortion was referred to as **"child-murder."**  
*The Revolution 4(1):4*  
July 8, 1869

*Elizabeth Cady Stanton*

She classified abortion as a form of **"infanticide."**  
*The Revolution 1(5):1*  
February 5, 1868.

**"When we consider that women are treated as property, it is degrading to women**

*Emma Goldman*

**"The custom of procuring abortions has reached such appalling proportions in America as to be beyond belief...So great is the misery of the working classes that seventeen abortions are committed in every one hundred pregnancies."**  
*Mother Earth, 1911*

**"We want prevention, not merely punishment. We must reach the root of the evil...It is practiced by those whose inmost souls revolt from the dreadful deed."**  
*The Revolution 4(1):4*  
July 8, 1869

**"All the articles on this subject that I have read have been from men. They denounce women as alone guilty, and never include man in any plans for the remedy."**  
*The Revolution 4(1):4*  
July 8, 1869



*Mary Wollstonecraft*

As early as 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, which Susan B. Anthony admired enough to serialize in *The Revolution*. After decrying, in scathing 18th century terms, the sexual exploitation of women, she said:

**"Women becoming, consequently, weaker...than they ought to be...have not sufficient strength to discharge the first duty of a mother; and sacrificing to lasciviousness the parental affection...either destroy the embryo in the womb, or cast it off when born. Nature in everything demands respect, and those who violate her laws seldom violate them with impunity."**

*Matilda Gage*

**"[This] subject lies deeper down in woman's wrongs than any other...I hesitate not to assert that most of [the responsibility for] this crime lies at the door of the male sex."**

*The Revolution 1(14):215-6*  
April 9, 1868

*The Revolution 1(10):146-7*

The Revolution 1(10):140-1  
March 12, 1868

**that we should treat  
our children as prop-  
erty to be disposed of as  
we see fit."**

*Letter to Julia Ward Howe,  
October 16, 1873, recorded in  
Howe's diary at Harvard  
University Library*

*Stanton's and Anthony's newspaper; The Revolution, and most  
other feminist publications of the last century refused to join  
in the common practice of printing advertisements for  
thinly-disguised patent medicine abortifacients.*

*Mattie Drinkerhoff*

**"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 circum-  
stances she has been greatly  
wronged."**

*The Revolution 4(9):138-9 September 2, 1869*

*Victoria Woodhull*

The first female presidential  
candidate was a strong  
opponent of abortion.

**"The rights of children  
as individuals begin  
while yet they remain  
the foetus."**

*Woodhull's and Claflin's  
Weekly 2(6):4  
December 24, 1870*



*Sarah Norton*

**"Child murderers practice their profession  
without let or hindrance, and open infant  
butcheries unquestioned...Is there no  
remedy for all this ante-natal child murder?  
...Perhaps there will come a time when...an  
unmarried mother will not be despised  
because of her motherhood...and when the  
right of the unborn to be born will not be  
denied or interfered with."**

*Woodhull's and Claflin's Weekly  
November 19, 1870*

**P R O**

*Alice Paul*

The author of the original Equal Rights  
Amendment (1923) opposed the later  
trend of linking the E.R.A. with abortion.  
A colleague recalls her saying

**"Abortion is the ultimate  
exploitation of women."**

*Feminists for Life*

Feminists for Life was founded in 1972 by  
two women, one who was expelled from the  
National Organization for Women's meeting  
in Ohio for distributing antiabortion  
literature.

We proudly continue the feminist tradition  
of working for a society in which women can  
make life-affirming choices for themselves  
and their children.



**FEMINISTS FOR LIFE  
OF AMERICA**

**WOMEN DESERVE BETTER®**

**L I F E**

**733 15th Street, NW, Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20005, 202-737-FFLA  
feministsforlife.org**

Avoid diversions from what's important

**\* Don't fall for it**

Most often abortion advocates pit women against children. Don't fall for it. Unborn children are not the enemy — lack of practical resources and emotional support are the real enemies.



*continued from p. 11*

**How can/dare you call yourself a feminist?**

We stand on more than two hundred years of pro-life feminist history. It wasn't until the 1970s that the women's movement accepted abortion as a way to achieve equality in the workplace.

Feminists for Life believes that women have a right to be women in the workplace and in school. Women shouldn't have to pass as men. No woman or man should feel pressured to conform to a single, childless "model" for students or employees.

# A society that promotes women and the violence

**There are many forms of feminism. Who are you to say that true feminists must be anti-abortion?**

The basic tenets of feminism are nonviolence, nondiscrimination and justice for all. Abortion violates all three.

**Isn't feminism about a woman having rights equal to those of a man?**

No, it's much more than that. For 200 years, feminists like Mary Wollstonecraft, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Alice Paul worked to protect the rights of all and did not discriminate based on race, religion, gender, size, age, disability or parentage.

The early American feminists did not work to replace a patriarchy with a matriarchy.

Feminism is not about women passing as men. Women should celebrate our life-giving capacity.

Furthermore, abortion has hurt women by diverting feminist attention from other issues, particularly those that help mothers, such as affordable child care, comprehensive health care, and a living wage.

We refuse to choose between our education and career plans and our children.

*"When you consider that women have been treated as property, it is dumb to think we should treat our children as property to be disposed of."*

# abortion as a "necessity" or "necessary evil" underestimates of abortion and disregards what women really want.

## How dare you impose your values and morality on others? What gives you the right to tell women what to do?

Abortion is discrimination based on age, size, location, and sometimes gender, disability, or parentage. Once a woman is pregnant, she is forever changed, no matter what the outcome—marital or single parenthood, adoption, abortion or miscarriage. As pro-life feminists, our values are woman-centered and inclusive of both parents and child. I simply believe that we can do better for women. Don't you?

## Don't women need to control their own lives?

No one has complete control over his or her life. Once a woman is pregnant, the question is, "What is the best possible nonviolent outcome for her?"

## Don't you respect women enough to allow them to make a choice?

Most women do not have abortions as a matter of "choice," but because they feel they have no resources to support a different choice. A coerced decision is not a free choice—it's a last resort.

We support nonviolent choices—single motherhood, fatherhood, grandparenthood, marriage and various adoption options—along with practical resources and support.

A society that promotes abortion as a "necessity" or "necessary evil" underestimates women and the violence of abortion and disregards what women really want.

## If you don't trust me with a choice, how can you trust me with a child?

If by "choice" you mean abortion, say it.

All choices aren't equal, but all people are. We reject violence against women and children through abortion, and promote peaceful alternatives that benefit both woman and child.

Feminism has long championed the strength and dignity of women and equality. Women are capable of making the decision to parent or place a baby for adoption.

It's not about trust—it's about condemning violence.

## So you believe that a tiny speck—a zygote, blastocyst, embryo or fetus—has rights over a woman?

Women aren't stupid. We know it's a baby that is growing just like we did in our mother's wombs. That is why most women who feel they have emotional and financial support don't have abortions.

I don't believe in discrimination based on size, age or location. Do you believe that a child has less of a right to exist because he or she is small? Are large or tall people more valuable than small or short people? By that logic, most women would have fewer rights than men!

For years, abortion advocates have been pitting women against their unborn children, dehumanizing the growing child with misleading phrases like "blobs of cells" and "products of conception."

*Fetus* is a Latin word meaning "young child" or "young one." But in practice fetus has become a clinical, dehumanized term for an unborn child. Imagine if some group tried to deny medical care for *gravidas*. Once someone figured out that was the Latin word for pregnant women, the bewilderment would quickly shift to outrage.

## You are anti-choice.

Actually we support all nonviolent choices: marital parenthood, single parenthood choices—including fatherhood and grandparenting options—and the adoption options.

Most importantly, we challenge the status quo by supporting the resources women want and need to make nonviolent choices. ○

*regarding to women that  
posed of as we see fit."*

*Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1868*

## Avoid diversions from what's important

### \* Don't forget compassion

Sometimes you are talking to a woman who has had an abortion. She may assume that you are choosing a baby over women or condemning her. Let her know that we are here for her and working for better outcomes for women, and that there is post-abortion healing available. Remember, women most often have abortions because they lack resources and support—not for "convenience."

IF SHE'S IN TROUBLE



HE'S IN TROUBLE, TOO.

**When you conceive a child, you both enter into an implicit contract to care for your daughter or son for the next 18 years.**

**Thanks to legislation that strengthens paternity establishment and child support enforcement, no longer can the father threaten a woman or abandon his child by saying, "Hey, I'll pay for an abortion, but I won't pay for child support."**

**Non-custodial parents who refuse to pay for the children they conceive face stiff penalties including loss of a driver's license.**

### **What about contraception?**

Since FFL's mission is based on life beginning at conception, there is no FFL policy on contraception except when it presents a threat to a woman's health. Some FFL members support the use of contraception as long as there is no abortifacient effect, while others oppose it. Some oppose all or some forms of contraception for health reasons, others for religious reasons; others prefer natural methods to plan a family; and still others want to incorporate new medical technologies that track a woman's fertility to be used in conjunction with natural family planning methods. FFL's mission begins at conception, not before.

Our membership has a broad spectrum of opinion that reflects the diversity of opinions among the public.

In the time of the early American feminists, sex between married couples

was not always consensual. Many women bore 20 or more children, of whom only half survived. In order to affirm women's rights within marriage, most feminist foremothers promoted "voluntary motherhood," whereby women would have the education and right to fully participate in the decision to have sexual relations. FFL likewise supports education, life-planning, and mentoring programs for girls and women of all ages.

FFL focuses on the problems that women face during a pregnancy, planned or unplanned.

### **How about RU-486, aka mifepristone?**

Rather than being a simple, private alternative to surgical abortion, it actually requires three or four visits to a doctor. Women are required to sign an agreement to have a surgical abortion if the series of treatments doesn't result in an abortion.

For the first time, women will not be separated by a surgical sheet from witnessing the aftermath of abortion. Women may suffer the trauma of aborting at home or work.

Though RU-486 is touted as "safe," women's lives are being put at risk. One abortion doctor reported during the "fast track" trials that one of his patients lost half of her blood as a result of taking RU-486. We remember women like Holly Patterson who have died from this legal but lethal drug.

If a miscarriage is one of the worst things a woman can experience, then intentionally inducing an abortion is a reflection that we have failed her. Making abortion "simpler" with a pill doesn't address the root causes that drive women to abortion, nor does it eliminate the painful consequences.

How will a pill heal her pain? ○

prevention



# no justification

## **Disability—what if the fetus is or could be disabled?**

Persons with disabilities are devalued now as women once were.

If actual or potential disability is a reason to devalue children before birth, what cruel message does this send to persons with disabilities who are already born?

How many artists, musicians, writers with disabilities or no-fault brain disease have enriched our world? Would artist Toulouse-Lautrec's paintings have had a bigger impact if he were taller in stature? What would our world be like without the contributions of artist Van Gogh, musician Beethoven, or writer Sylvia Plath?

## **What about those in foster care?**

Many of the children waiting to be adopted are waiting because of legal processes, not a lack of loving homes. There are two million preapproved American couples awaiting adoption. Two million women want to be mothers right now, and many of them want more than one child.

## **Isn't abortion safer than childbirth?**

Statistics on abortion are highly suspect. While abortion is the most common form of surgery, there are no standard regulations or reporting requirements. This is because of strong opposition from the abortion industry and its advocates.

Using statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the abortion industry has said that only first-trimester abortions are safer than live birth. But one reporter did a simple database search for "mortality resulting from abortion" and found twice as many cases reported in newspapers as by the CDC, putting CDC statistics into serious question.

The mortality rates for pregnant women are lower in Ireland, where abortion is illegal. American women deserve better.

Even abortions that cause no physical scars can cause emotional damage.

## **Partial-birth abortion can save women's lives.**

If her life is truly in danger from pregnancy, then a doctor can perform a C-section to terminate the pregnancy, but not the child. Neonatal units have saved children as small as 10 ounces born three months prematurely.

According to the American Medical Association, this procedure is never medically necessary. Furthermore, partial-birth abortion can have devastating effects on women emotionally and psychologically. It requires three days of induced labor. Women are awake during the delivery and witness their baby's brains being removed from its skull. The procedure can also damage the cervix, contributing to future miscarriages. Women deserve better than this. ○



IS THIS THE FACE OF THE ENEMY?

**Abortion advocates pit women against our children.**

**But lack of emotional and financial support  
are the real enemies.**

**Feminists for Life believes that women should not  
feel forced to sacrifice our children for  
an education or a career.**

# common comments

## Make abortion rare

They say they want to make abortion rare but available. Why would anyone want to make something rare unless it is bad? We want to make abortion unthinkable. We also want to eliminate the coercive conditions that contribute to a perceived “need” for abortion.

## Personally opposed

Why are you opposed to it? If it is not good enough for you, why do you think it is good enough for other women?

I wouldn't wish an abortion on my worst enemy.

## “It” can't feel pain.

Neonatal pain experts have testified before Congress that the younger a person is, the more sensitive she or he is to pain, and the unborn are the most sensitive of all. The nervous system develops at 4 weeks, just about the time a woman learns she is pregnant and begins to bond with her child.

Unconscious patients can't feel pain, but we don't terminate them because of that.

Babies feel pain. And women feel the emotional and physical pain from an abortion, too.

## Young girls should have the right to choose.

Children have the right to be protected. One doctor, who used to perform abortions and still believes that they should be legal, told me that teens need their parents. He explained that pregnant teens seeking an abortion often wait too long and seek riskier and more dangerous second-trimester abortions, don't get proper follow-up care, may not take antibiotics, and may wait too long to seek medical attention if a complication occurs.

Judicial bypass—going before a judge to get an abortion without parental permission—is a disservice to teens. If the girl is in an abusive situation, she needs to have social services intervene, not give her an abortion and send her back home for continued abuse. Teens in abusive households sometimes get pregnant thinking that if they have a baby of their own, they can escape the situation, only to realize that they are not prepared to parent. Some who have an abortion get pregnant soon after in an attempt to replace the baby they aborted. If the girl is not in an abusive situation, she needs to work with her parents to find the best nonviolent choice for her.

Kate Mulgrew, famous for her role as the first female captain on “Star Trek,” placed her baby for adoption when she was 15 years old, and said, “I survived it.” She was reunited with her daughter two decades later. ○

*About the author: Serrin Foster has championed the needs of women and children since 1994, first as FFL's Executive Director and currently as President.*

## Avoid diversions from what's important

### \* Don't ignore. Acknowledge.

Acknowledge the reasons that drive women to abortion, but emphasize that abortion is not the answer. Women need holistic solutions and deserve real support.

### \* Springboard from agreement.

Don't be surprised if, once you've made your case, those who expected to differ with you end up saying, “I agree with 95% of what you are saying.” This is your opportunity to begin discussing holistic solutions to the problems women face.

been there .

done that .

HATED IT .

**No one wants to have an abortion,  
much less a second one.**

**But if you have had an abortion,  
you are at an even higher risk of experiencing  
the tragedy of abortion again.**

**If you need help,  
please visit [feministsforlife.org](http://feministsforlife.org).**





## OF WOMEN WHO MOURN

WOMEN'S ISSUES, women's rights and human rights have always been a passion of mine. As a teenager I assumed that legalized abortion was necessary for women to attain their educational and career goals. So it's not surprising that when I became pregnant at 18 I thought about having an abortion. I also considered adoption, but when I told my boyfriend, he said he would kick me out if I didn't have an abortion. I turned to my employer for advice. She agreed that abortion was the only logical option and offered to arrange one for me.

My experience at the abortion clinic was painful and humiliating. Although the young women awaiting their abortions were anxious and tearful, the clinic staff was cold and aloof. When the abortion provider entered my procedure room, I began to have second thoughts and asked her assistant if I could have a few minutes. The doctor yelled "shut her up" and started the suction machine. It was not an empowering experience. I felt violated and betrayed.

The promised solution — really the only option presented to me — wasn't the end of my nightmare, but only the beginning. I was completely unprepared for the emotional fallout after the abortion. It was difficult for me to understand why a surgical procedure would cause such deep regret and a sense of loss.

I soon found myself in a cycle of self-destructive behavior as I attempted to repress the sense that I had destroyed my child. Desperate for a fresh start, I broke up with my boyfriend, quit my job and moved to another state. Unfortunately my depression and self-hatred only deepened. When suicidal thoughts began to overwhelm me, I sought assistance.

As I struggled to come to terms with my negative reaction, I began to question whether abortion was compatible with my feminist beliefs. The abortion was unnatural. It was an act of violence against my own body and the body of my developing child.

Although much has changed since 1985, not much has changed for women experiencing an untimely pregnancy. They still face unsupportive partners and employers and are often unaware of the community resources available to them. They undergo abortion not so much out of choice, but out of desperation or as a last resort. In all the noise surrounding abortion, women have been forgotten.

*Michaelene Fredenburg  
Executive Director, Life Resource Network*

### Electronic Fund Transfer Form

*Help FFL Help Women and Children! Your monthly electronic donations provide essential support as FFL works to bring about positive change for women and children. Monthly donors receive President's reports, detailing FFL's progress. To begin your monthly contributions, simply go online to [feministsforlife.org](http://feministsforlife.org) and click on "Support FFL" or fill out the electronic transfer form and send it (along with a voided check) to FFL. Donations will be debited on the first business day of each month and will be put to work immediately by FFL. Your participation helps FFL continue the tradition of the early feminists—pro-woman and pro-life!*

I want my bank to transfer monthly donations to Feminists for Life of America. My authorization to charge my account at my bank shall be the same as if I had personally signed a check to FFLA. This authorization shall remain in effect until I notify FFLA, or notify my bank in writing that I wish to end this agreement, and my bank or FFLA has had a reasonable time to act on it. A record of each charge will be included in my regular bank statements and will serve as my receipt.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Amount of monthly pledge (\$5 minimum).

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone: Day(\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Eve.(\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please enclose a voided check from your account to show the bank's address and your account number.

Send to: Feminists for Life,  
733 15th Street, N.W., Suite 1100, Washington, D.C. 20005.  
Electronic fund transfers will begin immediately upon receipt.  
*Thank you!*

## COVETABLE STUFF®

To order FFL t-shirts, bumperstickers, totes, mugs, posters and pins, click on **Covetable Stuff®** at [feministsforlife.org](http://feministsforlife.org) or send a self-addressed stamped envelope to receive a free brochure.

Feminists for Life  
733 15th Street N.W., Suite 1100  
Washington, D.C. 20005





# Global Vision

Feminists for Life seeks lasting solutions to the problems that can drive women to abortion worldwide. These solutions include:

- increased education standards and opportunities for the poor, especially for girls
- increased employment opportunities for all women, especially poor women and those who have been excluded from such opportunities
- micro-loans and other business assistance for low-income women to start businesses and own land
- health care for mother and child, before and after birth, including prenatal care, assisted delivery, post-partum care, emergency services, immunizations, disease prevention and treatment, especially for the HIV/AIDS pandemic
- sustainable development that provides clean water, sanitation, housing and food
- child care for the working poor and regulations to protect vulnerable women and children from forced labor
- protection for women and children from violence, including sex trafficking
- measures to rescue women trapped in domestic violence

*FFL is a newly accredited Non-Governmental Organization, or NGO, at the United Nations with special consultative status.*

**Marie Smith**  
**International Director**

**Pregnant women in the developing world have a very high maternal mortality rate. Shouldn't women in these regions have access to legal abortion to save their lives?**

Legalizing abortion will not provide women with the holistic health care they need and deserve. Pregnant women die because they do not have prenatal care, safe and sanitary delivery facilities, antibiotics, transfusions, assisted delivery, and postpartum care. Legalizing abortion will not change this.

Maternal mortality rates will decrease when governments give priority to women's lives and act to save them. The focus must be directed on access to prenatal care, nutritional education, emergency medical care, assisted childbirth, postnatal care, and prevention and treatment of diseases. Even a simple delivery kit to ensure sanitary delivery conditions, clean cutting of the umbilical cord, and care for the newborn can reduce maternal and newborn mortality.

**What about very young women who give birth in developing countries? Wouldn't abortion help them?**

Young women give birth not because abortion is unavailable but because cultural practices promote early marriage, sexual activity and intentional impregnation. This often occurs before the young woman is physically ready to bear a child, which can result in obstetric fistula, severe tissue damage that leaves a woman unable to control the release of urine and feces. The result is that the woman is often abandoned by her partner and shunned by her community.

Abortion will not address this serious health problem; positive life-affirming education about women's bodies, the effects of early marriage and motherhood will. Education, job skills and employment opportunities will help young women direct their future. Girls who stay in school longer benefit from programs that teach them self-respect and self-worth as they obtain empowering skills and hope for the future. They are empowered to make healthier decisions and say "no" to sex. Thus, education is the solution, not abortion.

Women in developing nations also deserve prenatal care, skilled birthing attendants, and access to emergency obstetric

services. In cases where obstetric fistula occurs, women should have access to surgery that can repair the damage and restore them to full health and function in society.

Finally, young women need not only education but protection from exploitation, including sex trafficking, forced labor, physical abuse, and sex practices (such as men in Africa raping young girls in the false hope that it will cure their HIV/AIDS).

**Shouldn't abortion be made legal so it will be safe? What about reports of thousands of women dying worldwide every year from illegal abortion?**

Legalizing abortion exposes more women to abortion's physical and emotional complications and does nothing to resolve the deeper issues women face or address the unmet needs of women. Abortion doesn't give a woman an education or job skills. It doesn't put food on the table, or provide clean water. After an abortion, a woman returns to the same situation that drove her there. One abortion is too many. It means we have failed women.

Legalizing abortion does not make it safe. There is no such thing as safe abortion. In addition to the death of the child, both legal and illegal abortions can cause deadly complications to the woman such as perforation of the uterus and other surgical errors, hemorrhage, and infection.

Even years later, women who have had an abortion may suffer from infertility, miscarriage or premature delivery, breast cancer, depression, addiction, relationship strife, and/or inability to bond with children they bear later in life.

Unfortunately, there are no reliable statistics about abortion, whether illegal or legal. Some countries lack basic birth and death registration systems, so reports are based on estimates and assumptions. The World Health Organization acknowledges that data on unsafe abortion are scarce and subject to substantial error.

To make matters worse, some of the data cited are simply false. In the book *Aborting America*, former abortionist

**What women want and need is full participation as citizens.**

**“There must be a remedy for such a crying evil as this. But where shall it be found, at least where begin, if not the complete enfranchisement and elevation of women?”**

*Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1868*

Dr. Bernard Nathanson admitted that he and the abortion advocacy group NARAL (then the National Association to Repeal the Abortion Laws) lied about the number of women they claimed were killed by illegal abortion, as part of their successful strategy to push for legalizing abortion in the United States:

*“...it was always 5,000 to 10,000 deaths a year. I confess that I knew the figures were totally false...but in the ‘morality’ of our revolution, it was a useful figure, widely accepted...”*

We do not even know how many women have died from *legal* abortion in the U.S. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) does not require that information about pregnancy or abortion be listed on death records.

While abortion proponents manipulate so-called statistics, the real needs of women go unmet. And women continue to either die from lack of adequate health care or to sacrifice the lives of their own children due to a perception that they lack viable life-affirming choices.

What women want and need is full participation as citizens, equal access to resources and opportunities, and enforced legal protection against discrimination, violence, and oppression. Women deserve better than abortion.

### **Aren't there enough children in this world?**

Genocide is not the answer to population concerns. Women have abortions because of unmet needs, not because of population concerns. Women in developing countries ask for clean water, nutrition, the ability to own land, immunization and other health care services, education, etc. Their children are not their enemy—or ours.

### **Do terms like “reproductive rights,” “reproductive health,” “reproductive health care and services,” “family planning services” and “sexual health” really include abortion?**

Yes, they can, depending on who is using the term. Abortion advocates, especially at the UN, often intentionally redefine common terms to include abortion. The resulting confusion impedes true progress toward meeting the needs of women. Women's vital health needs are too important to be

compromised by the word games of governments and abortion advocates.

### **Isn't abortion a reproductive right and part of women's overall reproductive health care? Don't policies that limit a woman's choices jeopardize her health?**

Reproductive health cannot be separated from women's health in general; we must recognize that a woman's health needs begin in the womb and continue to her natural death. In some countries of the world an infant girl needs prenatal care for her mother and protection from sex selection abortion. The female child must be assisted at each stage of development and protected from the violence of the world, including infanticide, rape, incest, domestic abuse, abortion, forced labor, sex trafficking, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Structures in society need to be changed to help women. Acceptance of abortion as a solution means society no longer has to take pregnancy seriously and help the woman.

Despite word games, abortion is not “health care” but a sign that women's health needs have not been met. Research has shown that women are driven to abortion by a lack of practical and emotional support. A woman who has an abortion is not making a free choice; she does not see a viable choice other than abortion.

A similar example can be found in countries where there is a high rate of suicide among women. The answer is not to facilitate suicide for women who see no other choice. The solution is to address the deeper issues that are driving women to acts of desperation.

### **Poverty, more and more, has a feminine face. Isn't abortion an empowering choice for a poor woman's future?**

Education is the most empowering choice for any woman's future. It protects girls by preparing them for productive adulthood and helping them delay pregnancy until they are fully grown. Women who have had the benefit of education have more opportunities, social status, and community involvement. Their health is better, leading to healthier pregnancies, safer deliveries, and healthier children. They can make more informed decisions for themselves and their children.

In addition to education, economic programs like micro-loans empower women by allowing them to start businesses that provide support for their families and sustainable economic development for the larger community.

Destroying the lives of children and exposing women to the dangers of abortion does not empower women or improve families and communities. In reality, abortion benefits individuals and institutions that do not respect the dignity and rights of women. For example, abortion benefits employers and schools that do not want to accommodate the needs of pregnant women and mothers. Abortion benefits some men who act irresponsibly, abandon women and do not want to provide for their children.

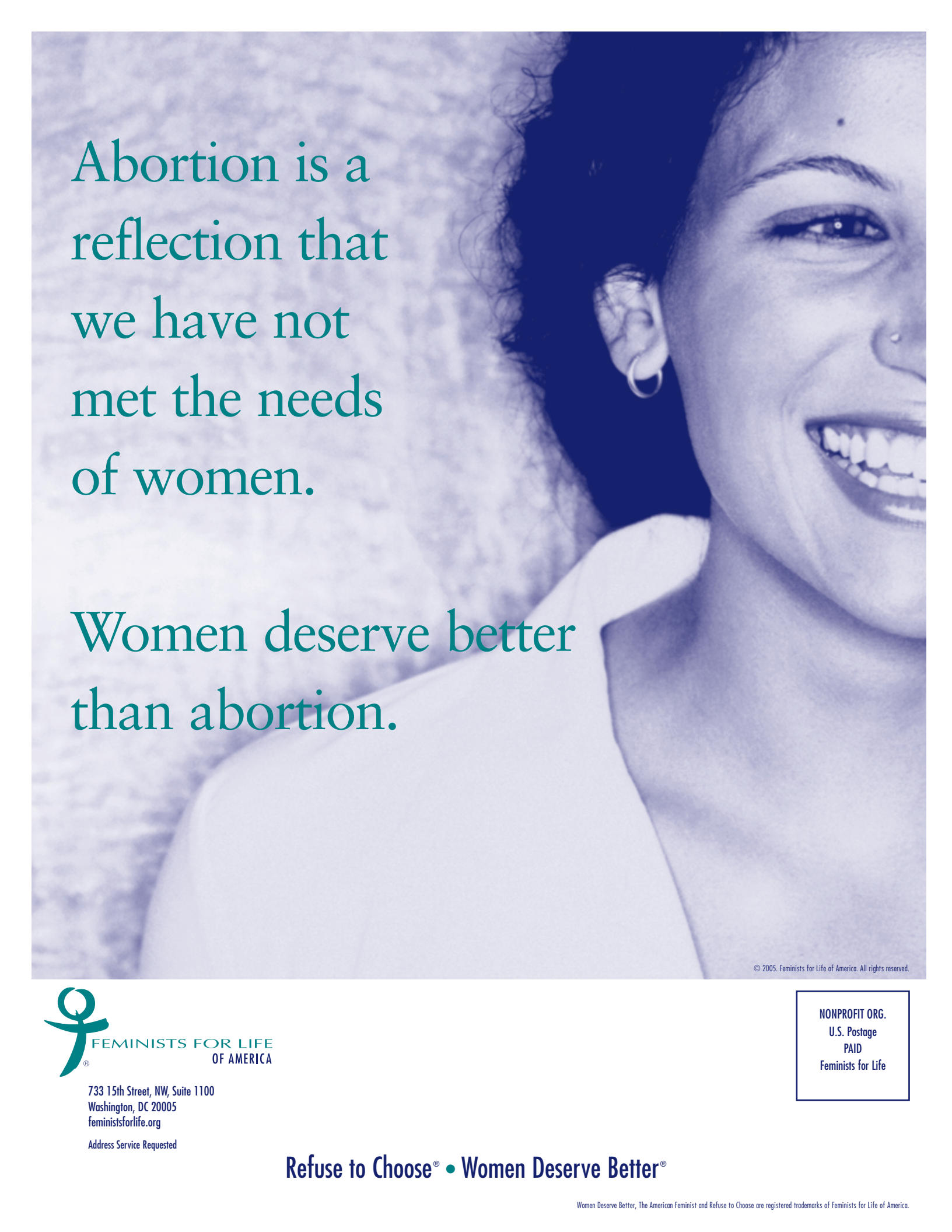
**What about the woman who has had an illegal abortion? Should she receive post-abortion care even if abortion is illegal in her country?**

Women facing any form of health crisis deserve assistance. True post-abortive care and counseling are needed to take care of a woman's physical needs as well as her emotional and psychological needs, and these should be provided regardless of the legal status of abortion in her country. At the same time, the term "post-abortive care" (PAC) must not be manipulated to include the use of abortion-inducing techniques like the manual vacuum aspirator (MVA) on pregnant women. ○

*About the author: Marie Smith began her pro-woman, pro-life activism in college and has expanded her advocacy worldwide. She became FFL's International Director in 2004.*



**Education is the most empowering choice  
for any woman's future.**



Abortion is a  
reflection that  
we have not  
met the needs  
of women.

Women deserve better  
than abortion.

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