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Women are "One of Us"

Professor Heather Widdows and Dr Sheelagh McGuinness

"'It is a beautifully simple step but could help save millions of lives…' So goes the tagline on the homepage of what has been one of the most successful European Citizen's Initiatives (ECIs) to date. On the contrary this is an initiative which risks lives, especially women's lives."

Read full opinion (/research/impact/perspective/eci.aspx)

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This debate has now closed.

Feedback

- M on 09 June 2014, **Jay** wrote

A majority of abortions are not the result of women having sex 'as much as possible' or 'as random as possible' and claiming so reduces your argument to an ignorant rant, I imagine spoken by the likes of someone lucky enough to have been brought up in a secure and loving family unit and never having faced the world with no support whatsoever. I am not saying there are not women who may make the decision to terminate a pregnancy based on more controversial reasoning such as lifestyle choices (i.e. accidents etc), but I am saying that even these women probably did not make the decision lightly and do not think their child is 'morally irrelevant'. The alternative that you suggest is to force women to carry babies that they do not want and may not be able to provide for adequately (emotionally as well as financially etc) which will result in more backstreet/mutilating abortions, more children being left in the care of the state or children being neglected. Bear in mind that although Britain's state care is not by any means perfect, it is a world away from some countries where children sleep in little more than cages with barely any human contact even, let alone quality time with a person who genuinely loves them and will support them as they make their way in life. A life that no one cares about and they did not ask for.

People cry about the human rights of unborn babies but having them unwillingly will not magically make happy families, and those children born into lives of poverty and no emotional support have a higher probability of severe mental illness, poorer standard of education, falling into lives of crime, promiscuity, lower emotional intelligence and the cycle begins again. To what end? The argument of terminations being counterproductive to an unsupportable aging populace doesn't make sense if those children themselves then need huge amounts of care until they're 16 and do not go on to contribute because they are unable/unwilling to get jobs or end up in prison. Those are the statistics, rethinking terminations can't be seriously considered until people offer ideas to improve the current services that are on offer that will suit the whole of Europe.

Of course it is easier to believe that abortions are wrong, that a life is a life, but I'm afraid Daniela is misguided in her judgment that those who have them are just irresponsible or promiscuous.

I wholeheartedly agree that the money would be better spent investing in large scale improvement of education, alternative or improved provision, more humane practices, an overhaul of the rights of father's etc, but do not forget those whose lives could be ruined and little gained by forcing people to carry babies they do not want.

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- AM on 08 June 2014, **Daniela** wrote

We boast with a liberal society, with human rights, etc and yet we promote such barbaric, inhuman practices that are worthy only of those societies which were promoting human sacrifice. Killing the embryo is the same with killing a life. And all in the name of ...what? Of a selfish, egotistic and hedonistic "right". Because, at the end of the day it boils down to this. So, yes, women you can have sex as much as possible, as random as possible - this is OK, but accepting the responsibilities of parenthood ...yeah, this is NOT ok!

But this has a series of other, very serious implications: the EU is complaining about the decrease and the aging of its population with all the negative consequences...but on the other hand it supports the decrease of its population by supporting abortions?!!!

Of course, it does. it is easier and much cheaper for the state to encourage killing unborn children rather than paying social support or postnatal support.

Another aspect of encouraging the killing of children, which are improperly called here "embryos" is that it creates the phony impression that an unborn child has no rights, that he is in fact no human being and therefore it is only "natural" to have denied the most basic and essential right: the right to live. This approach is indeed very dangerous because it implies that, after all, the criteria of deciding WHEN a human being becomes a human being with full rights can be very debatable. And they have been already debated by Julian Savulescu, the editor of Journal of Medical Ethics ranked number one in the area. He comes with the idea, that since the society sanctions positively abortions, it means that the society does not consider the unborn child a human being. But so is the newborn child! According to this...academic, the new born child can be killed by his parents if they wish so, because babies are "morally irrelevant"!!!!!!!

Savulescu's encouragement for killing new born babies is based on the same logic behind abortions and it boils down to the issue of: when, who and how is decided when a human being becomes a human being. If Savulescu had been just another psychopath among many others his stance would not have counted but he is the editor of a nr. 1 journal in Medical Ethics!! So, someone encouraging one of the most disgusting and barbaric type of crime, killing babies, is a "respectable" academic. On short in our "liberal'society promoting killing of the worst type is rewarded instead of being

punishing for instigating to crime.

But Savulescu's support for postnatal infanticide is based on the same rationale that lays behind the issue of abortions. It is not by chance that he re-names the infanticide "postnatal abortion"!!

The implications are very dangerous, because in this case the very issue of the right to life for children is randomized. Following the same relativistic approach, one can argue that between 1-7 years children can be also killed, because, yeah, they don't go to school yet, because they don't have valid political opinions or only God knows what other criminal absurdity can be invented. So, stop encouraging killing unborn children.!!! Better discourage sexual promiscuity and encourage family values.

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- M on 07 June 2014, **Alethia Clark** wrote

I am so excited that this initiative has received so much support in the EU. The people mentioned in this essay as being against the initiative say that it is not going to save millions of lives but it will marganialize women and they gave the following stastic: "The World Health Organisation estimate that approximately 289,000 women died in 2013 during and following pregnancy." This is very unfortunate and hopefully work can continue to be done but ending the pregnancy is not the only or even the best way to have prevented those maternal deaths. Are they saying that we should have had 289,000 infant deaths in eutero from abortion instead of 289,000 maternal deaths? Does that really make sense? Why are the maternal deaths of more value than the infant deaths? I can say from my own personal experience of having severe preeclampsia for three pregnancies and having to make the decision with the doctors each time of putting my life or my infants' lives first, that it is a very hard decision to make but there would not have even been an option to say "Well if we just kill the baby, then I will be fine." We wanted to save both myself and the baby! That is what the initiative is saying.

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