

'Spinning' out of control

Time to start calling foes and friends of abortion by their real names

by Ellen Snortland | 10/2/2008

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"If men could get pregnant, abortion would be a sacrament." — Florynce Kennedy, lawyer, activist, civil rights advocate and feminist (1916-2000).

"Pro-Life" is a "spin" term that I refuse to use. "Pro-life" is more aptly termed "anti-choice" but cunning spinmeisters on the fanatical religious right coined "pro-life" as a way to propagandize and put pro-choice people on the defensive. If you are pro-choice, which the majority of Americans are, please don't use "pro-life" as a term for our opponents. We are pro-choice and they are anti-choice and, I hope you'll agree after reading this column, anti-Bill of Rights, anti-environment, and anti-woman... and dare I say it ... unpatriotic. OK, I said it.

I hear too often, "Sure, I support a woman's right to choose, but I'm not a single-issue voter."

Stop right there. Abortion is NOT a single-issue issue. Choice is a constellation of issues, and by virtue of its complexity being pro-choice is an entirely appropriate reason to be against the GOP platform and its presidential ticket. Next time you're in a conversation and someone attempts to minimize abortion as one issue, let them know as a pro-choice person, you are also:

- **Pro-Bill of Rights:** One of the most important anti-tyranny measures the framers of the Constitution came up with is the First Amendment and its "freedom of religion" clause, which also means freedom FROM religion. While we respect people who oppose abortion on religious terms, they should have absolutely no constitutional ground to insist through state or federal law that anyone else adhere to some religions' stance that abortion constitutes murder.

Pro-choice adherents specifically believe in separation of church and state. Our religion, or lack thereof, values a woman's life, citizenship and her ability to decide if, when and with whom she brings a child to term as her right, and hers alone. We say a woman's life is more valuable than a fetus.

Choice is a very large umbrella and includes those who choose to carry their child to term for whatever reason. One can be very religious, not believe in abortion and still honor another woman's right to make her own decision. An anti-abortion person can still be pro-choice, relying on their powers of personal or religious persuasion to convince another to have a baby. They don't need legislation or judicial decrees to impose their views on others.

Also, as a pro-Bill of Rights person, you adhere to the notion there are matters that are PRIVATE, like health and medical decisions, family size and who you sleep with, including those of the same sex.

- **Pro-environment:** We are smack-dab in the middle of an ecological crisis that includes pollution of air, water and soil; violent weather patterns, global warming, natural resources stretched beyond breaking points, fragile flora and fauna species pushed to the brink of extinction, decaying inner-cities, crumbling infrastructures, and all because of what? TOO MANY PEOPLE living on the planet!

So anti-choice people are advocating for more of us, not only domestically but in our foreign policy too? Excuse me? Unless anti-choice people have some other planet they are planning on colonizing, we need fewer folks, not more. Oh, yeah, silly me. Some of them are praying for the "rapture," the day when Jesus Christ returns and takes the believers back to heaven — which, on second thought, is kind of like planning to go to another planet.

Meanwhile, those of us "left behind" would like to have something left other than our politics. Personally, I hope there is a rapture. Good riddance. Our nation's founders were fearful of people just like them. Many of our ancestors left Europe to avoid their ilk. Now it's their turn to leave.

- **Pro-woman and pro-family:** Being anti-choice is misogynist. Male supremacists, whether men or women, believe females are not citizens, fully capable of making a decision that's best for herself and her family situation. They don't believe women should have the freedom to make mistakes. How patriarchal, demeaning and patronizing! The Declaration of Independence boldly states that there are certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Coercing a pregnant girl or woman into having an unwanted child epitomizes loss of life, liberty and happiness. A woman is either a human being fully responsible for her own life and its ups and downs, or she is not. Passing laws that force someone to have an unwanted child is tyranny of the cruelest kind. Someone who is unable to determine whether to have a child

is not a full person under the law. Sorry.

If pro-choice people were to take some cues from the anti-choice "spin" rules, we would take back the public discourse and redefine terms. We could just as easily categorize anti-choice zealots with "pro-theocracy" or "pro-tyranny" labels.

Thank goodness for the Bill of Rights. Without it, I would never be able to express opinions that oppose the pro-tyrannists. Anti-choice is unpatriotic. There, I said it again.

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