

## Lobbying for Life

By Kelly M. Rosati, JD

At the Aloha Pregnancy Care and Counseling Centers, volunteers and staff experience firsthand the real life impact of state and federal laws upon the lives of island women and their unborn children.

Fifteen year old Leilani\* is seeking an abortion and her parents. Her parents don't even know she's pregnant. 21 year old Jackie\* is spiraling deeper and deeper into post-abortion trauma. She was never informed about the physical or psychological effects of abortion - they just wanted her money. No other choices were ever even discussed.

So, just how did we get to this place, anyway? How could this be possible?

### **One Terrible Day**

On January 22, 1973, in a 7-2 ruling, the United States Supreme Court issued the tragic Roe vs. Wade decision. The court declared that unborn children are not "persons" entitled to protection under the U.S. Constitution. Instead, the Court declared that women possess a Constitutional right to privacy, which includes the right to have an abortion. As a result, state laws outlawing abortion were declared unconstitutional by the high Court. As a practical matter, abortion became legal in all 50 states for all nine months of pregnancy for any or no reason whatsoever.

Since that time, almost every third child conceived is killed by abortion. A staggering 40 million innocent children have lost their lives in the name of choice. But did those children have a choice? Who spoke for them? Who speaks for them now?

### **History Repeats Itself**

The mantra of "choice" has produced similar legal and human tragedies in the past. In 1857, also in a 7-2 ruling, the United States Supreme Court issued its infamous Dred Scott decision. In Dred Scott vs. Sanford, the Court held that slaves were not "persons" entitled to Constitutional protection. Absurd, right. Downright evil in fact.

But there is a disturbing 19th century ring of familiarity in nearly 21st century arguments favoring "the right to choose." Supporters of abortion rights often quip: "Opposed to abortion? Then, choose not have one. But don't impose your morality upon me. The Supreme Court has declared abortion legal. "

Slavery proponents in the 1800s made similar arguments. "Opposed to slavery? Then, choose not to own slaves. But don't impose your morality upon me. The Supreme Court has declared slavery legal."

Only after a civil war and adoption of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution, did the tragedy of Dred Scott begin its reversal.

### **Is there hope for reversal in our modern day abortion tragedy?**

That depends on each of our responses to this great injustice of our day. Here on Oahu, each and every day, the Aloha Pregnancy Care and Counseling Centers do their part in the reversal - one mother and little child at a time.

### **So, What's the Situation in Hawaii?**

It is difficult to know with certainty how many unborn island children die from abortion because the state's abortion reporting laws are virtually ignored by abortion providers.

The data available from the Alan Guttmacher Institute (AGI) (the research arm of Planned Parenthood) paints the most complete picture. According to AGI, there were nearly 7,000 abortions in Hawaii in 1996. The actual figure is likely higher. In 1992, AGI reported over 12,000 island abortions.

Unfortunately, Hawaii has one of the very worst records in the nation on the abortion issue. In addition to being one of the first states to officially sanction abortion, our current record is similarly shameful.

- We are one of only 12 states that do not require ANY parental knowledge or consent before a minor daughter obtains an abortion.
- We are one of only 16 states that use state tax dollars to pay for abortions for some poor women.
- We are one of only 4 states with NONE of the seven abortion restriction laws monitored by Planned Parenthood.

### **But there is something we can do about that!**

#### Upcoming Legislative Sessions - Opportunities for Improvement

While abortion remains a constitutionally protected "right" of women, courts have since affirmed the right of state government to establish certain abortion restrictions. They include:

- Requiring parental notification & consent for minors seeking abortions;
- Requiring a waiting period for women seeking abortions;
- Requiring the informed consent of women seeking abortions; and,
- Restricting some late term abortions, including the "procedure" known as partial birth abortion.

Some of these abortion restriction laws will be debated during upcoming legislative sessions. Stay tuned to learn how YOU can play a part in turning the tide on the legislative front.

In the meantime, support the Aloha Pregnancy Care and Counseling Centers - be a friend for life and help save a life. It's one of the best decisions you'll ever make.

*\*The names have been changed to protect the identity of the clients*

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