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# A Peculiar Logic of Pro-Abortion Advocacy

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Abstract. This article identifies a weakness in pro-abortion advocacy and how this weakness can be resolved to support said advocacy.

Many pro-abortion forces throughout the world have attacked United States (US) president George W. Bush for issuing an executive order that denies US federal funds to foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGO) that furnish legal abortions, counsel women on the legal abortion option, and/or advocate for policy changes to facilitate abortion. The usual rationales to support the attack include contentions that women should control their own bodies and that (without the funding) the NGOs will not be able to provide non-abortion related family planning and women's health services. Both these rationales may be logically founded but miss the mark of what is really at issue among anti-abortion advocates and about abortion itself.

Should women be allowed to control their own bodies? One unfortunate aspect of focusing on this question is that it reinforces the notion that women's bodies are but objects that are to be controlled by someone--by women or by others. Thus, the very women and men who seek to attenuate the notion of women as objects may be doing the contrary. Another unfortunate aspect of focusing on this question is suggesting that women or men should have complete control over their bodies. Should such control always be the case if individuals choose to use their bodies to take the lives of others or even themselves--not just through violence acts but through choosing not to receive treatment for deadly and highly infectious disease?

Does President Bush's decision necessarily preclude non-abortion related family planning and women's health services provided by NGOs? Only if the NGOs also engage in what the President seeks to prohibit. And only if women desire abortion-related information and/or abortions. And here the abortion issue returns to the main issue. Is abortion taking a life?

Most pro-abortion advocates assert that abortion is not taking a life. This stance facilitates advocacy for pro-abortion but also facilitates anti-abortion advocacy. A more intellectually honest position would be to agree that abortion is taking a life and that taking a life is ethically and morally acceptable in certain or all situations. By choosing all situations, pro-abortion advocates would logically be supporting their own demise when continuing to live would get in the way of others controlling their own bodies. By choosing certain situations, pro-abortion advocates would be adding to scenarios in war, crime fighting, self-defense, and the like. By choosing certain situations, pro-abortion advocates would change the primary argument from what is taking a life or whether to ever take a life to when one should take a life. Many anti-abortion advocates who would answer "never" might have to change their positions given that many of them do advocate taking life in other situations.

President Bush's executive order is made to order for all sides in the abortion discourse to take a more intellectually and emotionally honest position. (See David, H. P. (1994). Reproductive rights and reproductive behavior: Clash or convergence of private values and public policies? *American Psychologist*, 49, 343-349; Linders, A. (1998). Abortion as a social problem: The construction of

"opposite" solutions in Sweden and the United States. *Social Problems*, 45, 488-509; Pellegrin, K. L., & Frueh, B. C. (1994). Why psychologists don't think like philosophers. *American Psychologist*, 49, 970; Pellergrum, D.E. A deadly global gag rule. *The New York Times*, p. A27; Stotland, N. L. (1996). Conceptions and misconceptions: Decisions about pregnancy. *General Hospital Psychiatry*, 18, 238-243; Thornton, J. G. (1994). The ethics of prenatal screening and abortion for fetal abnormality: A personal view. *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology*, 12, 155-161.) (Keywords: Abortion, Bush.)