

**LIVE ACTION**

# **IS ABORTION EVER THE RIGHT "CHOICE"?**



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## Are There Exceptions That Justify Abortion?

In this eBook we want to walk you through some difficult cases that are common exceptions people feel make abortion acceptable or the only option. Our heart is that these pro-life responses will give you the tools you need to continue to stand for the preborn and be a source of hope for a young parent facing a grave situation.

## Pro-Life Responses to Grave Situations

### Does pregnancy from rape or incest justify abortion?

A woman who has survived sexual assault has suffered a horrific violence and injustice, and she is deserving of support, help, healing, and advocacy.

The guilty party in a sexual assault case is the rapist, who should be held accountable to the fullest extent of the law. However, even in states that allow the death penalty, the crime of rape or sexual assault does not carry such a penalty. ***Why then should innocent children receive the death penalty for the crimes of their guilty fathers?*** Since it is unfair to hold a born child responsible for the crime of her father, so it is with a preborn child.

Consider the testimony of Pam Stenzel<sup>[1]</sup>, a woman who was conceived in rape:

*“My biological father is a rapist. I don’t even know my ethnicity. But I am still a human being. And I still have value. And my life is not worth less than yours simply because of the way I was conceived. And I don’t believe that I deserve the death penalty because of the crime of my biological father.”*

The United Nations has already declared that the preborn do not deserve the death penalty because of the crimes of their biological *mothers*. In the UN’s Covenant on Civil and Political Rights<sup>[2]</sup>, Article 6 (5), when referencing capital punishment, says, ***“Sentence of death... shall not be carried out on pregnant women.”***

What is the difference between a guilty pregnant woman who committed a crime her country says is deserving of the death penalty and a guilty non-pregnant woman who did the same? In the body of the first woman is the presence of an innocent child. Setting aside the contested topic of whether some guilty people should or should not receive capital punishment, both sides of the debate over capital punishment are united on the idea that it is wrong to make the innocent pay for the crimes of the guilty. So if children are not deserving of the death penalty for the crimes of their mothers, why then are they deserving of the death penalty for the crimes of their fathers?

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***Furthermore, how can killing an innocent third party be considered compassionate? Will the act of abortion heal and undo the violence already done?***

Consider the testimony<sup>[1]</sup> of Ashley Sigrest, who had an abortion after getting pregnant from rape:

*“After I was raped I felt a lot of fear; there was shame that I felt because of what had happened to me. But after having the abortion, the fear and the shame grew even more. It turned to guilt... I didn’t choose to have sex, someone else chose to rape me. But I did make the choice to have an abortion, I made the choice to kill my child... I had to go to bed every night knowing I killed my child...My life was no longer more about the rape. The rape to me didn’t even matter anymore because I had to live with every day knowing that I killed my child. It wasn’t a rapist’s child. It was my child.”*

Abortion is not the path to healing for victims of sexual violence. Instead, abortion adds more violence and trauma on top of the violence the woman already endured, perpetrating a death sentence on another innocent, vulnerable party.

There are powerful testimonies from sexual assault survivors who choose to parent their children conceived in violence. Here is a testimony from Lianna Rebolledo<sup>[4]</sup>:

*“I was brutally raped by two men and I became pregnant...I kept my baby. And when I had my baby girl she gave me hope and she helped me go on in my life. When she was a little girl she used to tell me, ‘Mommy thank you for giving me life; thank you for keeping me.’ That’s when I realized she was the one who gave me my life back...[She] is now a 22-year-old woman. She’s a beautiful woman, very caring. And she helped me to move on; she helped me to heal. I never saw my rapist through my daughter because she showed me that it was a different person that had nothing to do with that night.”*

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<sup>[1]</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bcpteSh\\_22c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bcpteSh_22c)

<sup>[2]</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>

<sup>[3]</sup> <http://www.savethe1.com/ashley-sigrest-ms-pro-life-speaker/>

<sup>[4]</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IrYOj3iwskk>

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### If a pregnant woman’s life is in danger, is abortion justified?

Abortion is never medically necessary to save a woman’s life. The Dublin Declaration<sup>51</sup>, which has more than one thousand signatures from obstetricians, neonatologists, pediatricians, midwives, and other medical professionals, states the following:

*As experienced practitioners and researchers in obstetrics and gynaecology, we affirm that direct abortion – the purposeful destruction of the unborn child – is not medically necessary to save the life of a woman.*

*We uphold that there is a fundamental difference between abortion, and necessary medical treatments that are carried out to save the life of the mother, even if such treatment results in the loss of life of her unborn child.*

*We confirm that the prohibition of abortion does not affect, in any way, the availability of optimal care to pregnant women.*

This is reinforced by the testimony of former abortionist Dr. Anthony Levatino who describes a typical “life of the mother” case:

*I was faculty at the hospital for nine years, and I saw hundreds of cases of really severe pregnancy complications — cancers, heart disease, intractable diabetes out of control, toxemia of pregnancy out of control. And I saved — in those nine years — I saved hundreds of women from life-threatening pregnancies. And I did that by delivering them — by ending their pregnancy by delivery, either induction of labor or caesarean section. Delivering the baby. And I always tell people: in all those years, the number of babies that I had to — that I was obligated to deliberately kill in the process — was zero. None.*

In other words, when a life-in-danger medical condition arises, the solution is not to directly kill the baby, but to address the woman’s medical situation.

### Induced Labor and/or Delivery of a Premature Child

There are some cases when a woman’s health crisis may result in the premature delivery of the child. In the case of chorioamnionitis (when the membranes are infected<sup>52</sup>), an ethical solution is inducing labor to eliminate the infected membranes, an infection that otherwise could kill the mother and child. These interventions are very different from abortion, because abortion targets the baby’s body to destroy the child, as opposed to addressing a medical condition and trying to save both lives. Granted, if the preborn child is younger than the age of viability, she may not survive. But this is not an abortion.

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### Tubal or Ectopic Pregnancies

In the case of a tubal pregnancy (where the embryo has implanted in the fallopian tube instead of the uterus), an ethical solution is to remove the mother’s fallopian tube through a procedure called a salpingectomy.<sup>[2]</sup> Dr. Anthony Levatino [states in a video interview](#) that this procedure is not an abortion, which directly kills the child:

*“Ectopic pregnancies are life-threatening. Treating an ectopic pregnancy is not doing an abortion— it is saving that woman’s life. It is that simple.”*

### Beware the False Dilemmas

It is important to note that sometimes abortion advocates may claim a mother’s life is in danger when, in fact, it isn’t. Consider the heartbreaking case of a 10-year-old girl in Paraguay, whose pregnancy from rape made international news in 2015. Although she was advanced in her pregnancy when it was discovered (21 weeks along), some abortion supporters claimed abortion was necessary to save the pregnant girl’s life. And as the pregnancy progressed to 26 weeks, some still insisted on abortion. However, whether by abortion or birth, ***either way the preborn child would need to eventually come out of the young mother’s body.*** Why should removal by abortion be the response instead of delivering alive — even if early?

In this case, Paraguayan government doctors countered that the girl’s life was not actually in danger. They pointed out that she received check-ups, was having a normal pregnancy, and was receiving care in a shelter. Even if her young body would not be able to sustain maintaining pregnancy to 40 weeks, delivering the viable fetus via induction of labor at the required time, or through a caesarean section, could result in a live birth — it would not be necessary to directly kill her child. Eventually, the young mom delivered a healthy, 6-pound baby girl via c-section.

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<sup>[5]</sup> [www.dublindeclaration.com](http://www.dublindeclaration.com)

<sup>[6]</sup> <http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/stephanie-gray-legal-abortion-is-not-the-answer-in-ireland-deaths>

<sup>[7]</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ebop\\_iOotQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ebop_iOotQ)

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If a preborn child is given a challenging prenatal diagnosis and is likely to die at birth or be disabled, is abortion acceptable?

### Case A: The preborn child is not likely to survive after birth.

Let’s take Bob and Larry. Bob will die from a heart attack tomorrow, and Larry will die from a heart attack in twenty years. Do they both have the same right to life today? Absolutely, because we acknowledge that regardless of the difference in the length remaining in their lives, as long as they are alive, we ought to treat them equally. So, too, if a preborn child will die shortly after birth (compared to many of us who will die decades after birth), we who live longer do not have a right to end the lives of those who live shorter.

Consider the story of T.K. and Deidrea Laux,<sup>[8]</sup> whose child, Thomas, had a poor prenatal diagnosis. They knew they wouldn’t have long with their son, yet they didn’t shorten his life more than nature was already going to. In reflecting on the full pregnancy and the five days they had with him after birth, Thomas’ mother, Deidrea, said:

*“...I can’t imagine what it would have been like to not have had this opportunity to go through this with him and to get to know him and to love him. It really has been amazing as opposed to just shoving it down and forgetting about it and pretending that his life didn’t happen and that it didn’t matter.”*

### Case B: Other challenging prenatal diagnoses (e.g., chromosomal abnormalities)

The concept behind human rights doctrines is to establish the equality and dignity of all human beings by virtue of their existence, not because of their features or abilities. How human beings differ from one another has no relevance to a human’s right to live. It is a human rights violation to kill someone who is 25 years old and has Down syndrome or spina bifida; it is also a human rights violation to kill her for those conditions when she is younger and growing in the womb. Just because people are different doesn’t mean they should not be protected. Their lives are just as valuable and worth protecting, as the online community, [I am Viable](http://iamviable.org),<sup>[9]</sup> reminds us.

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<sup>[8]</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ToNWquoXqJI>

<sup>[9]</sup> <http://iamviable.org>

### In conclusion

There is never a circumstance when the intentional killing of the preborn child is a solution to a challenging situation. There is never a circumstance when it is legitimate or permissible to have an abortion. In each of these challenging circumstances, there are two patients involved - the mother and the child. Both deserve the best care and attention, and both have the fundamental right to life that must be protected.