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Abortion debate: Is common ground within reach?

By Steve Bakke  March 3, 2021



Abortion polarizes America

Biden's call for unity is revealing its insincerity. For the President, unity means capitulation, especially regarding the abortion debate – to the victor goes the spoils, after all. The President issued executive actions to use tax dollars for promoting abortion here and abroad. "Abortion colonialism" fits this determination to carry the pro-abortion message around the globe. Joe Biden is the most pro-abortion president ever.

Now that democrats won the presidency and have majorities in both houses of Congress, the abortion battle is heating up. As if to flaunt their new-found power, a red flag was waved in front of serious pro-lifers with the appointment and approval of Xavier Becerra to be Secretary of Health and Human Services. He has no background in healthcare – not as an administrator, physician, or scientist.

Becerra's main qualification seems to be that he is an outspoken, even radical, supporter of abortion rights. As California Attorney General, he tried to target pro-life pregnancy centers. He wanted these centers to make information available which promoted abortion services. That would be like requiring a cancer clinic to sell cigarettes in the lobby. Becerra planned to levy significant fines if the centers didn't comply. Sadly, the new Secretary of HHS now has a national platform from which to promote his radical ideas.

We've become tangled in arguments using terms like female healthcare, fetal viability, cluster of cells, accidental biology, medical waste, and (the world champion for absurdity) anti-abortion as a tool of white supremacy. Opinions like mine have been characterized as a "creepy obsession with women's reproductive choices." Let's dispense with ridiculous mocking of those holding a pro-life stance.

Imagine sitting in the Alabama House chambers and hearing state representative John Rogers express the following during an abortion debate: "Some kids are unwanted, so you kill them now or you kill them later. You bring them in the world unwanted, unloved, you send them to the electric chair. So, you kill them now or you kill them later." And here's what New York Democrat Representative Nadler stated on the U.S. House floor when debating the "Equality Act": "What any religious tradition ascribes as God's will is no concern of this Congress." Obstacles to civil discussion abound.

We should wrap ourselves in the immensity of this tragic issue. Since Roe v. Wade in 1973, over 62,000,000 fetal lives have been terminated – mostly elective. It's impossible to characterize the trend as "legal, safe, and rare." Some seem unaware that this isn't a debate about clipping fingernails, and the discussion of sanctity of life has nothing to do with endangered minnows in a pond. Some radicals are more sympathetic to those minnows than to a human life in a womb.

I'm predicting a major backlash for the Biden administrations' determination to enlighten the U.S. and the world about the advantages of abortion. While the U.S. is close to being the most abortion friendly country in the world, its citizens exhibit interesting trends. According to the Guttmacher Institute, the number of abortions is 13.5 per 1000 women of childbearing age. That's the lowest level since Roe v. Wade.

According to Gallop, almost 47% consider abortion morally wrong. And while 44% consider abortion as morally acceptable, only 29% of all respondents believe it should be unrestricted. According to a Knights of Columbus/Marist poll, 75% of Americans favor significant restrictions on abortion. I'm convinced this points to a developing "common ground" among Americans.

More research is needed, and the right questions must be asked, but it appears self-described "pro-lifers" and "pro-choicers" alike have similar opinions. Most on both sides of the issue are uncomfortable with the growing popularity of late and full-term abortions. And there are strong indications that a commanding majority would like to set the intense debate aside by mutually supporting restrictions on abortion. There's a good chance both sides could agree to permit abortions but limit it to situations such as rape, incest, or saving the mother's life.

There are no perfect solutions for participants in this debate, only compromises. For me, the compromise I described is consistent with the intended context of our Declaration of Independence when it refers to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Let's reject the aggressive policies being taken by this administration and insist that politicians listen to the commonsense preferences of the majority of American citizens.