

## Clarifying abortion issue

B.J. Nikkel's Jan. 24 commentary, "Court weighs partial-birth abortion

issue," shows her propensity for distorting the facts.

Nikkel quotes, allegedly accurately, a Jan. 15 *Denver Rocky Mountain News* story, saying the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said that partial-birth abortion is "the most common method of second-trimester abortion." That's a lie.

The last paragraph said the most common second-trimester procedure was dilation and evacuation, D&E. The 8th Circuit Court decision: "The term 'partial-birth abortion,' . . . refer(s) to a particular procedure, aka intact dilation and evacuation (D&E)." Then the court said that the most common second-trimester procedure is a D&E.

In the third trimester, no abortion procedure is performed unless, for example, a heart condition or a fetal anomaly that is incompatible with life, risks a woman's health or life. In 1996, out of 1.6 million abortions, only 649 were performed at 26 weeks-plus.

Before viability, which encompasses the first and second trimester, an abortion can be performed when both woman and fetus are healthy. In the second trimester, however, a woman may be healthy and the fetus unhealthy, as tests to begin to determine fetal anomalies can't happen until approximately 14 to 16 weeks. Also, a woman may be unhealthy, but the fetus is healthy. Either of those cases could create extreme circumstances within either the second or third trimester.

Nikkel cannot lie about the facts and maintain any shred of credibility, Nikkel's readers deserve an admission of guilt and an apology from her.

Colorado  
2-8-00  
Peggy Loonan,  
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## Correction

2-9-00

A typographical error occurred in a letter to the editor by Peggy Loonan that was published Tuesday. The third paragraph should have read: "The last paragraph said the most common second trimester procedure was dilation and evacuation, D&E. The 8th Circuit Court decision: 'The term 'partial-birth abortion,' . . . refer(s) to a particular procedure a.k.a., intact dilation and extraction (D&X)." Then the court said that the most common second trimester procedure is a D&E."