

Life and liberty of woman and fetus

To the editor:

Richard Grimler's April 26 letter challenged me to provide statistical data. I can do that.

First, public policy that's correct and moral for defining the parameters of abortion may or may not be so for criminal behavior like stealing or murder. That's a debate we can have, but the issue here is what's the correct moral public policy for abortion. It's not true that most unplanned, unwanted children are placed for adoption.

The number of women, especially teens, keeping their babies has led infertile couples to adopt children from outside of the United States. Time, 1991, "The number of babies available in the U.S. has declined. In 1966, 65 percent of white babies who were born to single moms were given up, but 20 years later it was down to 5 percent."

Teen moms lack parenting skills, completed education and job skills placing them at the poverty level. Fort Collins Commission on the Status of Women, 1999, "While women represented 51.3 percent of the U.S. population in 1990, they comprised 57.7 percent of all persons in poverty." Rocky Mountain News, May 24, 1999, "One of every five children lives in poverty. If near-poverty is added, nearly one of three American children isn't growing up with what experts consider to be an adequate family income."

The Federal Publication, Child Maltreatment, 1999, "There were an estimated 826,000 victims of maltreatment; 58.4 percent suffered neglect, 21.3 percent physical abuse, 11.3 percent sexual abuse. The highest victimization rates were for the 0-3 age group, 61.8 percent of perpetrators were female with 41.5 percent of those females younger than 30." Clearly, most unplanned, unwanted children, especially of teen moms, won't be placed for adoption and many will suffer neglect, abuse and live in poverty.

Grimler is right; most children placed in adoptive homes will be loved, nurtured and supported. It's important to note that child abuse statistics include those who are abused by foster and adoptive parents, and in spite of loving adoptive families, many adopted children will experience emotional and self-esteem issues as a result of being given away.

Referencing Grimler's last points, appealing to people's emotion with deliberately deceptive pictures of alleged aborted fetuses is very different than discussing the real and very emotional subject of rape and incest. Women who are impregnated as a result of a frightful, violent, humiliating, degrading act of rape incest perpetrated by a trusted parent or relative must make their own decisions about the pregnancy, and no one else.

The scientific community recognizes cell division begins upon the union of egg and sperm. The medical community recognizes pregnancy upon implantation. Neither makes the case for the beginning of life being at conception. No one's personal belief about when life begins will vacate the need for a public policy to balance the right to life and liberty of woman and fetus.

Julie Hall, board member
Life and Liberty for Women
Milliken

Repacked
Avald 5/23/01