

## Bush administration tries an end-around with abortion laws

To the editor:

President Bush set the stage for a legal battle to overturn Roe vs. Wade by deciding to allow states to extend health coverage under the Children's Health Insurance Program to "unborn children" by broadening the definition of a "child" eligible for coverage to include a zygote, embryo and pre-viable fetus. Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson denies this is about the politics of abortion, but Julie Bosman, writing in the New Republic said, "Thompson didn't make a very convincing idiot. It's pretty obvious that the whole point ... was to start an argument about abortion and to score points with the political right."

Thompson says this rule change is "about helping poor mothers be able to take care of their unborn children," but acknowledges that states can already cover pregnant women under their Children's Health Insurance Program by getting a waiver from the federal government to existing rules, New Jersey and Rhode Island having already done so. Thompson even shortened the time it takes his department to approve state applications. Bosman says, "If Bush were simply interested in giving more low-income women prenatal care, he could've expanded the program's eligibility to pregnant women without ever mentioning the rights of a fetus." Clearly, this move wasn't needed to ensure the health of low-income women and their fetuses.

Some, while acknowledging the obvious motivations of Bush and the disingenuous words of Thompson, nevertheless call it a minor change and no threat to legal abortion. But Life and Liberty for Women isn't convinced. While the success of a battle to overturn Roe is uncertain with many factors yet to be deter-

mined, the battle itself is imminent as long as anti-abortion extremists control the means to make it possible, as this case in point proves.

Moreover, bearing some responsibility and blame for this latest threat poised to overturn Roe, are current abortion rights organizations and supporters. Complacency and the benign seemingly non-confrontational language of "choice" vs. rights have led us here. Embracing the term "choice" while anti-abortionists marginalized abortion providers and displayed pictures of alleged aborted fetuses on street corners in America, unchallenged by the horrific sights and sounds of illegal abortion, created shame where none is called for.

Termination of pre-viable human life isn't wrong or immoral precisely because while a zygote, embryo, and pre-viable fetus is a human being and is alive in the womb; they've absolutely no right to life over a born woman. Restriction of post-viable abortion, except when a born woman's health or life is at risk, is rightly recognized by Roe vs. Wade. Just think of where we wouldn't be now, if this had been about rights all along.

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