

COMPETING RIGHTS

Politically speaking, abortion *is* an issue that involves competing rights. On the one hand, you have the mother's right not to be pregnant. On the other hand, you have the baby's right not to be killed. The question that must be answered is this. Which right is more fundamental? Which right has a greater claim? Abortion advocates argue that outlawing abortion would, in essence, elevate the rights of the unborn over and above those of the mother. "How can you make a fetus more important than a grown woman?", they might ask. In reality, outlawing abortion wouldn't be giving unborn children *more* rights, it would simply gain for them the one most fundamental right that no one can live without, the right to life.

If a baby is not to be aborted, then the pregnant mother must remain pregnant. This will also require of her sickness, fatigue, reduced mobility, an enlarged body, and a new wardrobe. Fortunately, it is not a permanent condition. On the flip side, for a pregnant woman not to be pregnant, her child must be killed (unless she is past her 21st week of pregnancy, in which case the baby may well survive outside the womb). Abortion costs the unborn child his or her very life and it is a thoroughly permanent condition. This is what's at stake, both for the child and for the mother. It is not an issue of who is more important, but rather who has more on the line.

Any time the rights of two people stand in opposition to each other, the government must protect the more fundamental right. Let's consider crosswalks. A car is driving down the street while a person is crossing the street. The law requires the driver of that car to slow down and stop (giving up their right to drive where they want, when they want, and at what speed they want) so that the pedestrian may cross the street in front of him. Why? Why must the driver temporarily give up his right to drive down the street just because someone else is walking across the street? Why is the right of the man on foot upheld while the right of the man in the car is denied? It is not because the pedestrian is more valuable than the driver but rather because, if the driver doesn't stop, the pedestrian will likely be killed. In order for the driver to proceed down the street at full speed, at that moment, it will cost the pedestrian his life. In order for the pedestrian to finish crossing the street, at that moment, it will cost the driver a few minutes of drive time.

Obviously, for a woman to remain pregnant, she gives up far more than a few minutes of drive time, but she gives up far less than the baby who would otherwise be killed. This is what it all comes down to. Abortion permanently takes away the life of the unborn. Pregnancy temporarily takes away some of the freedoms of the mother. Since there is far more at stake for the child, the more fundamental right to life must be upheld.