

Abortion Timeline

1959

The American Law Institute (ALI) proposes a model penal code for state abortion laws. The code advocates legalizing abortion for reasons including the mental or physical health of the mother, pregnancy due to rape and incest, and fetal deformity.

1967

Apr. 25: Colorado Gov. John A. Love signs the first "liberalized" ALI-model abortion law in the United States, allowing abortion in cases of permanent mental or physical disability of either the child or mother or in cases of rape or incest. Similar laws are passed in California, Oregon, and North Carolina.

1970

Apr. 11: New York allows abortion on demand up to the 24th week of pregnancy, as Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller signs a bill repealing the state's 1830 law that banned abortion after quickening except to save a woman's life. Similar laws are passed in Alaska, Hawaii, and Washington state.

1971

Apr. 21: The U.S. Supreme Court rules on its first case involving abortion in *United States v. Vuitch*, upholding a District of Columbia law permitting abortion only to preserve a woman's life or "health." However, the Court makes it clear that by "health" it means "psychological and physical well-being," effectively allowing abortion for any reason.

1972

By year's end a total of 13 states have an ALI-type law. Four states allow abortion on demand. Mississippi allows abortion for rape and incest [1966] while Alabama allows abortion for the mother's physical health [1954]. However, 31 states allow abortion only to save the mother's life.

New York repeals its 1970 abortion law but Gov. Rockefeller vetoes the repeal.

1973

Jan. 22: The U.S. Supreme Court issues its ruling in *Roe v. Wade*, finding that a "right of privacy" it had earlier discovered was "broad enough to encompass" a right to abortion and adopting a trimester scheme of pregnancy. In the first trimester, a state could enact virtually no regulation. In the second trimester, the state could enact some regulation, but only for the purpose of protecting maternal "health." In the third trimester, after viability, a state could ostensibly "proscribe" abortion, provided it made exceptions to preserve the life and "health" of the woman seeking abortion. Issued on the same day, *Doe v. Bolton* defined "health" to mean "all factors" that affect the woman, including "physican, emotional, psychological, familial, and the woman's age."

May 14: The National Right to Life Committee is incorporated.

June: The first NRLC Convention is held in Detroit, gathering activists from pro-life groups around the nation to form what has become the largest pro-life organization in the United States.

1974

Jan. 22: The first March for Life is held in Washington, D.C., on the west steps of the Capitol. Thousands of pro-life advocates have attended the March for Life every year on the anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision.

Nov. 6: Pro-life Sen. Bob Dole (R-Ks.) is elected in the first major statewide political battle after the Roe v. Wade decision. Dole, with the help of newly formed groups of pro-life activists, defeats Congressman William Roy, a doctor who performed abortions.

1975

Feb. 15: Boston abortionist Kenneth C. Edelin is found guilty of manslaughter for the death of an unborn child. (See also Dec.17, 1976.)

Mar. 10: The first Human Life Amendment is introduced in the U.S. Senate by Sens. James L. Buckley (Cons.-NY) and Jesse Helms (R-NC).

1976

Apr. 28: The U.S. Senate conducts a "test vote" on the Human Life Amendment. The amendment draws 40 votes. A two-thirds vote (67 senators) is needed to approve a constitutional amendment.

June 28: The first Hyde Amendment, sponsored by Rep. Henry Hyde (R-II.), is approved by the U.S. House. The amendment to the Department of Health and Human Services appropriations bill prohibits Medicaid funding of abortions with narrow exceptions.

July 1: In *Planned Parenthood of Central Missouri v. Danforth*, the U.S. Supreme Court strikes down a Missouri law that banned the use of saline amniocentesis as an abortion method and that obliged a married woman seeking an abortion to obtain her husband's consent. The Court also holds that states could require a minor to obtain consent of one parent before obtaining an abortion, but the law must contain a "judicial bypass" option for minors who do not wish to obtain parental consent.

Dec. 17: The manslaughter conviction of abortionist Edelin is overturned by the Massachusetts Superior Judicial Court, which rules that legal abortions are manslaughter only if the baby is definitely alive outside the mother's body.

1977

Feb.: Mission Possible is launched - - a project of Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life, an NRLC state affiliate, to provide organizational development assistance and matching grant "seed" money for developing state right to life groups, primarily in the Southeastern United States.

June 20: In *Maier v. Roe*, *Beal v. Doe*, and *Poelker v. Doe*, the U.S. Supreme Court holds that federal and state governments are under no obligation to fund abortion in public assistance programs, even if childbirth expenses are paid for indigent women and even if the abortion is deemed to be "medically necessary."

July: NRLC Pro-Life Legal Action Project is initiated to provide and fund the legal defense for pro-life legislation and to seek affirmative legal action to obtain the judicial implementation of pro-life goals.

1979

June: A major pro-life book is released. Dr. Bernard Nathanson, the National Abortion Rights Action League cofounder who renounced the pro-abortion movement, publishes *Aborting America*, which exposes the lies used by abortion supporters in their quest to overturn legislation protecting unborn children.

Sept. 15-16: National Right to Life PAC is organized.

1980

Jan. 10: NRLC files a friend-of-the-court brief with the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of the Hyde Amendment.

June 30: In *Harris v. McRae*, the U.S. Supreme Court upholds the Hyde Amendment, ruling that there is no constitutional right for women to receive abortions at public expense.

Nov. 4: Republican pro-life candidates Ronald Reagan and George Bush defeat pro-abortion President Jimmy Carter and Vice President Walter Mondale. In addition, a remarkable 11 Senate seats switched from the pro-abortion column to the pro-life column. It is the first year NRL PAC is involved in elections.

1981

Mar. 23: In *H.L. v. Matheson*, the U.S. Supreme Court approves a Utah parental notification law. The law requires an abortionist to notify the parents of a minor girl who is still living at home as her parent's dependent when an abortion is scheduled.

July 9: A U.S. Senate subcommittee approves a bill sponsored by Sen. Helms designed to challenge *Roe v. Wade*. (See also Sept. 15, 1982.)

Dec. 16: A U.S. Senate subcommittee approves a constitutional amendment proposed by Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) declaring that the Constitution secures no right to abortion. (See also Sept. 15, 1982.)

1982

Mar. 10: The Senate Judiciary Committee approves the Hatch Amendment, which would give the states and Congress joint authority to regulate abortion.

Mar. 27-28: NRLC Board of Directors adopts a resolution supporting the Hatch Amendment, the Human Life Bill, and the NRLC Unity Amendment.

April.: French researcher Dr. Etienne-Emile Beaulieu of Roussel Uclaf announces that a test was conducted using the abortifacient RU 486 to abort 11 women.

Sept. 15: The Helms bill to challenge Roe v. Wade is blocked by a pro-abortion filibuster in the U.S. Senate.

1983

June 15: In *Akron v. Akron Center for Reproductive Health*, the U.S. Supreme Court strikes down state requirements that abortions performed after the first trimester be done in a hospital, women's right to know laws, and waiting periods after information is provided to the woman seeking abortion before she can consent to an abortion. However, the Court rules that states may insist that only licensed physicians perform abortions.

June 28: The U.S. Senate rejects the Eagleton-Hatch Amendment, which declared "a right to an abortion is not secured by the Constitution," by a vote of 49-50. A two-thirds vote is required to pass a constitutional amendment.

Nov. 10: The U.S. Congress approves the Ashbrook Amendment, barring the use of federal employees health benefits program to pay for abortions, except for the life of the mother.

1984

June 17: The Reagan Administration announces the "Mexico City Policy," denying funds to foreign organizations that "perform or actively promote abortion as a method of family planning in other nations."

Nov. 6: Pro-life President Reagan is reelected, defeating the pro-abortion Democratic ticket of former Vice President Walter Mondale and Rep. Geraldine Ferraro.

1985

Jan. 7: Pro-Life Perspective, NRLC's daily radio program, is first aired.

June: National Teens for Life is founded.

July 10: U.S. House reaffirms the Mexico City Policy by a 45-vote margin. The Kemp/Kasten Amendment is also enacted, denying U.S. population-assistance funds to "any organization or program which, as determined by the President, supports or participates in the management of a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization."

July 15: U.S. Justice Department files a friend-of-the-court brief in the *Thornburgh* case urging the Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

1986

June 11: In *Thornburgh v. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists*, the U.S. Supreme Court strikes down state laws mandating that an abortionist use the method most likely to allow the child to be born alive in post-viability abortions. It also strikes down women's right to know laws and a waiting period after information is provided to the woman seeking abortion before she can consent to an abortion.

Sept. 17: Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Ma.) and other leading pro-abortion senators fail in an attempt to block President Reagan's promotion of Associate Justice William Rehnquist to chief justice. Antonin Scalia is confirmed to replace Rehnquist as an associate justice.

1987

July 30: President Reagan announces at a meeting of pro-life activists that "a program which does provide counseling and referral for abortion services as a method of family planning will not be eligible for Title 10 funds." (See July 2, 1988.)

Aug. 25: President Reagan appoints a federal task force to encourage adoption as an alternative to abortion.

Oct. 23: Nomination of pro-life Judge Robert Bork to the U.S. Supreme Court is rejected by the U.S. Senate, 58-42. Pro-abortion groups conducted a fierce campaign, which resulted in his defeat. This seat ultimately went to Anthony Kennedy, who voted to reaffirm the core holdings of Roe in 1992.

1988

March.: The Reagan Administration issues a moratorium on new federally funded fetal tissue transplant research.

July 2: The U.S. District Court in New York upholds the constitutionality of Reagan Administration regulations barring Title 10 programs from involvement in abortion.

Sept. 23: The French government approves licensing of RU 486 for use in the country.

Sept. 26: The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issues an "Import Bulletin" banning the importation of RU 486 for personal use.

Sept. 30: The U.S. Senate passes an amendment to the District of Columbia appropriations bill to bar D.C. from paying for abortions or performing abortions in its city-operated hospital. Since the U.S. House had already passed the amendment, it goes into effect immediately.

Oct. 29: The French government orders Roussel Uclaf to reverse its Oct. 27 decision to halt distribution of RU 486.

Nov. 8: Pro-life Republican candidates Vice President George Bush and Dan Quayle defeat pro-abortion Democratic candidates Michael Dukakis and Lloyd Bentsen.

1989

Apr. 9: Pro-abortion supporters hold a rally in Washington, D.C. Although the media reported attendance at 300,000, a Park Police captain told congressmen he would have estimated between 75,000 and 85,000.

July 3: In *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, the U.S. Supreme Court, upholding portions of a Missouri law, finds that the federal Constitution does not require government to make public facilities such as hospitals available for use in performing abortions.

Nov. 17: The so-called "Freedom of Choice Act" is introduced for the first time in the U.S. House by Rep. Don Edwards (D-Ca.) and in the U.S. Senate by Sen. Alan Cranston (D-Ca.). (See also Mar. 5, 1992; June 30, 1993.)

Nov. 18: Pennsylvania Gov. Robert Casey signs the Abortion Control Act. (See also June 29, 1992.)

Nov. 22: President Bush vetoes a foreign aid appropriations bill because it contains the Mikulski Amendment, which would have restored funding to the UNFPA, an organization that played a key role in China's coercive population-control program. This program violates the 1985 Kemp-Kasten Amendment, which denied U.S. "population assistance" to any organization that "supports or participates in the management of a program of coerced abortion or involuntary sterilization."

1990

Mar. 7: A federal court in New York dismisses Planned Parenthood's lawsuit challenging the Mexico City Policy.

Mar. 30: Idaho Gov. Cecil Andrus vetoes a law that would have prohibited the use of abortion as a means of birth control.

Apr. 28: Over 300,000 pro-life supporters flock to Washington, D.C., for the NRLC-organized Rally for Life.

May 22: The Washington Post reports that Roussel Uclaf has changed its policy and will market RU 486 outside France.

June 25: In *Ohio v. Akron Center for Reproductive Health*, the U.S. Supreme Court upholds a one-parent notification requirement with a judicial bypass procedure. The Court also rules, in *Hodgson v. Minnesota*, that a two-parent notification law with a judicial bypass is constitutional.

June 26: In a letter to key U.S. House leaders, President Bush restates his commitment to both the Kemp/Kasten Amendment and the "Mexico City" policy, which cut off U.S. aid to organizations that promote the legalization and utilization of abortion in foreign nations.

June 27: U.S. House rejects a proposal to fund two organizations that promote abortion in less-developed nations by a vote of 224-198.

July 1-4: "Abortion and the Media," a four-part Los Angeles Times series by David Shaw, documents the widespread pro-abortion media bias.

Aug. 1: The AFL-CIO Executive Council rejects a proposal for the union to abandon its traditional neutrality on abortion and take a pro-abortion stance.

1991

Jan. 25: The French Council of State rules that the government did not have the authority to force Roussel Uclaf to resume distribution of RU 486. The decision removes Roussel's excuse that it had no choice but to continue distributing the drug.

May 23: In *Rust v. Sullivan*, the U.S. Supreme Court upholds the Bush Administration's regulations that prohibit routine counseling and referral for abortion in 4,000 clinics that receive federal Title Ten family planning funds. [In November, President Bush vetoes a \$205 billion health and human services

appropriations bill because it includes a provision that would have blocked enforcement of the pro-life regulations; the veto is sustained by a 12-vote margin.]

June 3: In a letter to House Speaker Thomas Foley, President Bush vows, "I will veto any legislation that weakens current law or existing regulations" pertaining to abortion.

June 18: The Louisiana legislature overrides Gov. Buddy Romer's veto of a law protecting unborn children from abortion in all cases other than when the life of the mother is at stake or in cases of rape or incest. (See also Mar. 8, 1993.)

July 1: President Bush nominates Judge Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court. (See also Oct. 15, 1991.)

Oct. 15: The U.S. Senate confirms the nomination of pro-life Judge Thomas to the Supreme Court by a vote of 52-48.

Oct. 25: Ana Rosa Rodriguez survives a third-trimester abortion attempt by New York City abortionist Abu Hayat, but is born with one arm severed at the shoulder. (See also Feb. 22, 1993.)

Nov.: Threat of Bush veto maintains the Reagan-era ban on the performance of abortion on U.S. military bases, except to save the mother's life.

1992

Feb.: Bush Administration threatens to veto legislation that would require federal funding of research that encourages or depends on abortion, including transplantation of tissue harvested from aborted babies.

Mar. 5: President Bush vows that the radically pro-abortion Freedom of Choice Act "will not become law as long as I am President of the United States."

June 29: In *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, the U.S. Supreme Court reaffirms the core holdings of *Roe* but modifies it by discarding the trimester scheme, upholding certain restrictions on abortion, and adopting the "undue burden" test of abortion laws that requires opponents of an abortion regulation to prove the provision would create an "undue burden" on a woman's right to abortion in order for it to be declared unconstitutional. The vote is 6-3.

July 13: The U.S. House sustains President Bush's veto of a bill to require federal funding for transplanting tissue taken from aborted babies by a narrow 14-vote margin.

Sept. 13: A gruesome abortion technique is described by abortionist Martin Haskell at a National Abortion Foundation seminar. The technique, later called "partial-birth abortion" by Congress, involves the abortionist delivering all but the head of a baby from her mother's womb, piercing the skull, and suctioning out the brain, then completing the delivery.

Nov. 3: Pro-abortion Democratic candidates Gov. Bill Clinton and Sen. Al Gore defeat pro-life President George Bush and Vice President Dan Quayle.

1993

Jan. 22: President Clinton reverses years of pro-life progress by issuing five executive orders reversing Title 10 regulations banning abortion referral by federal employees, repealing the Mexico City Policy restricting federal funding of international organizations that work to reverse countries' abortion laws,

negating the ban on funding for fetal tissue transplants, ordering military hospitals to perform abortions, and asking the FDA to "review" the import ban on RU 486.

Feb. 22: Abortionist Abu Hayat is convicted of assault and illegal abortion for his attempt to kill Ana Rosa Rodriguez by abortion.

Mar. 8: The U.S. Supreme Court refuses to hear an appeal of a lower court ruling striking down Louisiana's protective abortion law.

Apr. 14: The Los Angeles Times reports that the Clintons plan to include coverage for elective abortion in their massive health care plan that they intend to propose to Congress later in the year. (See also Sept. 26, 1994.)

May 12: NRL News reports that all obstetrics staff at U.S. Army, Navy, and Air Force hospitals in Europe are unwilling to perform abortions, despite President Clinton's executive order authorizing them to do so.

June 18: Pro-lifers demonstrate against RU 486 at sites across the United States.

June 30: The U.S. House renews the Hyde Amendment by an 85-vote margin. An NRLC-led lobbying campaign defeats the so-called "Freedom of Choice Act," a proposed federal statute to invalidate even the narrow types of state abortion regulations permitted by the Supreme Court.

Nov. 22: The Clinton Administration announces that the International Planned Parenthood Federation will receive \$75 million over the next five years.

Dec. 28: The Clinton Administration faxes a letter to every state's Medicaid director ordering the states to change their laws and provide payments for abortions when an abortionist reports that a pregnancy resulted from rape or incest.

1994

Jan.: The American Council of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' Executive Board becomes the first national doctors' organization to endorse training non-physicians to perform abortions.

Feb. 3: Mother Teresa speaks at the National Prayer Breakfast attended by President Clinton and his wife, Hillary, saying "the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion."

Apr. 20: First annual "Proudly Pro-Life" Awards Banquet is held in New York City.

May 15: Roussel Uclaf donates U.S. patent rights for RU 486 to the Population Council.

June 30: In *Madsen v. Women's Center Inc.*, the U.S. Supreme Court says judges may create buffer zones to keep pro-life demonstrators away from abortion clinics.

Sept. 26: Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-Me.) announces that the Clinton Health Care Plan will not be introduced in the U.S. Senate in the current session. A massive public education and lobbying campaign, led by NRLC, contributes heavily to the ultimate defeat of the Clinton proposal to force all Americans into a national health system that would ration lifesaving care and pay for abortion on demand.

Oct. 27: The Population Council announces that testing of RU 486 is underway in the United States.

Nov. 8: In nationwide congressional elections, not a single pro-life member of Congress, of either party, is defeated by a pro-abortion challenger. Republicans take over majority control of both houses of Congress. Pro-lifers pick up six votes in the Senate and about 40 in the House.

1995

Mar. 30: Pope John Paul II publishes the encyclical *The Gospel of Life*, a call to commitment and action in defense of human life.

June: National College Students for Life is founded.

June 14: Rep. Charles Canady (R-Fl.) introduces the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Aug. 10: Norma McCorvey, the "Jane Roe" of *Roe v. Wade*, tells a nationwide audience on *Nightline* that she rejects abortion and the pro-abortion movement and now supports the right to life of unborn children. She had already revealed that this pregnancy was not the product of a rape - - as she had previously contended - - showing that Roe had been built on a lie.

Aug. 18: NRLC launches its web site at www.nrlc.org.

Aug. 22: Abortionist David Benjamin is convicted of second-degree murder in the botched-abortion death of Guadalupe Negron. He is the first New York abortionist to be convicted of murder.

Nov. 1: The U.S. House passes the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, the first federal bill since *Roe v. Wade* to ban one type of abortion, with a vote of 288-139.

Dec. 7: The U.S. Senate passes the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, 54-44.

1996

Apr. 10: President Clinton issues his first veto of the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act.

May 2: A new federal law is enacted to protect medical training programs and personnel from being forced to participate in performing or training in the performance of abortions. President Clinton reluctantly signs the measure as part of an omnibus spending bill.

July 19: The Food and Drug Administration's Reproductive Health Advisory Committee recommends that the FDA approve marketing of RU 486 for women up to 49 days pregnant.

Sept. 11: Planned Parenthood announces the FDA authorized a nationwide abortion study of methotrexate and misoprostol, another abortifacient combination.

Sept. 18: The FDA declares RU 486 "Approvable," although it asks the Population Council to provide more information on "labeling and manufacturing practices" before the drug can be marketed.

Nov. 5: Pro-abortion President Clinton and Vice President Gore defeat the pro-life Republican ticket of Bob Dole and Jack Kemp.

1997

Jan.: The PBS documentary program Media Matters documents pervasive pro-abortion bias and distortion in major media coverage of the partial-birth abortion debate.

Feb.: Ron Fitzsimmons, head of the National Coalition of Abortion Providers, tells journalists he "lied through my teeth" in claiming that partial-birth abortions were performed very rarely and only for extraordinary medical reasons, explaining that he had just "spouted the party line" developed by leaders of other pro-abortion groups.

Mar. 20: The House passes the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act by a veto-proof margin of 295-136.

Apr. 8: Hoechst AG announces it is ceasing all future production, marketing, and distribution of RU 486. Instead, it says it is transferring all rights to the abortifacient in the U.S. to the Population Council and worldwide to Edouard Sakiz, former Roussel Uclaf president.

May 20: The American Medical Association's Board of Trustees endorses the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act.

May 21: The U.S. Senate, in its second attempt, passes the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act 64-36, three votes short of the majority needed to override President Clinton's expected veto.

June 16: The U.S. Supreme Court upholds a Montana law that requires that abortions be performed only by physicians, not their assistants.

Oct. 10: President Clinton again vetoes the ban on partial-birth abortions.

Dec. 8: Fortune magazine declares NRLC the 10th "most powerful" public interest group in the country. The pro-abortion National Abortion and Reproduction Rights Action League is only No. 43 and Planned Parenthood ranks 65th

1998

Feb. 12: Sen. Spencer Abraham (R-Mi.) introduces the Child Custody Protection Act into the U.S. Senate, which would make it illegal for adults to transport minors across state lines for an abortion if that action would circumvent the parental involvement law of a state.

Apr. 1: Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fl.) introduces the Child Custody Protection Act into the U.S. House of Representatives.

Apr. 30: Results of a U.S. trial of RU 486 are published in the New England Journal of Medicine. The Population Council declares the drug "safe" downplaying the serious complications suffered by many women.