

Organ Donation Argument

(Response to Lucy Cont'd). It would seem that the correct place to exercise body autonomy is prior to intercourse - when the woman can rightly exercise control over her own body. Once conception has occurred, she would then be exercising control over another's body - the fetus's.

Susan [REDACTED]

Copied from a friend: ""Last night, I was in a debate about these new abortion laws being passed in red states. My son stepped in with this comment which was a show stopper. One of the best explanations I have read:

'Reasonable people can disagree about when a zygote becomes a "human life" - that's a philosophical question. However, regardless of whether one believes a fetus is ethically equivalent to an adult, it doesn't obligate a mother to sacrifice her body autonomy. Body autonomy is a critical component of the right to privacy protected by the Constitution, as decided in *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965), *McFall v. Shimp* (1978), and of course *Roe v. Wade* (1973).

Consider a scenario where you are a perfect bone marrow match for a child with severe aplastic anemia; no other person on earth is a close enough match to save the child's life, and the child will certainly die without a bone marrow transplant from you. If you decided that you did not want to donate your marrow to save the child, for whatever reason, the state cannot demand the use of any part of your body for something to which you do not consent. It doesn't matter if the procedure required to complete the donation is trivial, or if the rationale for refusing is flimsy and arbitrary, or if the procedure is the only hope the child has to survive, or if the child is a genius or a saint or anything else - the decision to donate must be voluntary to be constitutional. This right is even extended to a person's body after they die; if they did not voluntarily commit to donate their organs while alive, their organs cannot be harvested after death, regardless of how useless those organs are to the deceased or how many lives they would save. That's the law.

Use of a woman's uterus to save a life is no different from use of her bone marrow to save a life - it must be offered voluntarily. By all means, profess your belief that providing one's uterus to save the child is morally just, and refusing is morally wrong. That is a defensible philosophical position, regardless of who agrees and who disagrees. But legally, it must be the woman's choice to carry out the pregnancy.

She may choose to carry the baby to term. She may choose not to. Either decision could be made for all the right reasons, all the wrong reasons, or anything in between. But it must be her choice, and protecting the right of body autonomy means the law is on her side. Supporting that precedent is what being pro-choice means."

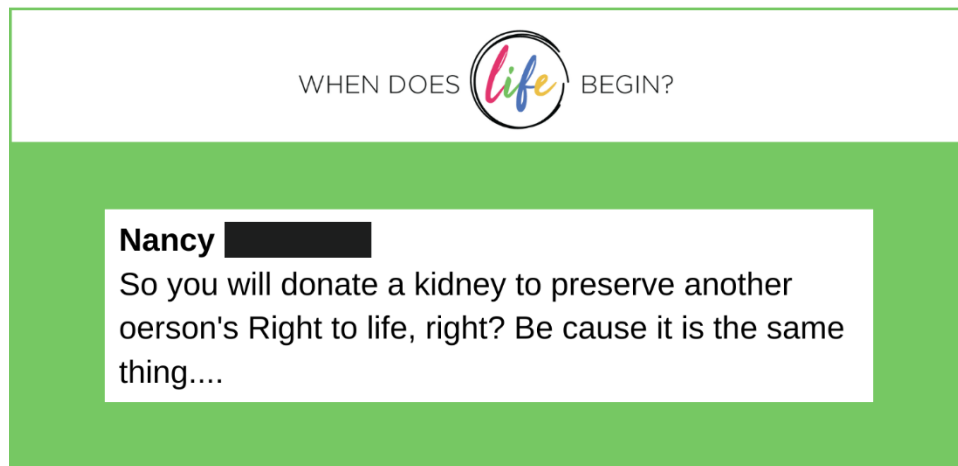
Susan, thank you for your thoughts. Respectfully, we would like to respond. First, the definition of human life is not a philosophical question. It is a scientific, biological issue. At fertilization, all 46 chromosomes scientifically identifying the being as a human being are in place. To Brent's second point, some will argue that the fetus's human life does not have the same value as an adult's human life. But then where do we draw the line? What about a newborn which remains totally dependent?


We definitely agree that body autonomy is important. Therefore, should we not protect the body autonomy of the fetus - a separate human life? It would seem that the correct place to exercise body autonomy is prior to intercourse - when the woman can rightly exercise control over her own

body. Once conception has occurred, she would then be exercising control over another's body - the fetus's.

Donation of organs, marrow, etc. is a completely different issue. The hypothetical patient has no connection to the donor, whereas the fetus has an intimate connection/relationship to the mother from the moment of conception. Relationship matters.

Continuing with Brent's discussion of choice, a person's choice extends only to the boundary where their choice negatively affects another person. The fetus is a biologically unique human being. There are two bodies and two unique human beings involved. The FIRST right enumerated in our Declaration of Independence is the Right to Life. That foundational right is reaffirmed in our Constitution and throughout our nation's body of law. Looking beyond strict law to general civic principles, Mahatma Gandhi said, "the true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members." We applaud choice but it needs to be exercised prior to the creation of a new human being who then has rights of its own.



WHEN DOES  BEGIN?

Nancy [redacted]
So you will donate a kidney to preserve another person's Right to life, right? Be cause it is the same thing....

Nancy...a random stranger has no claim on another person's organs. There is no tie of responsibility. However, the mother and father have a responsibility to the baby which they created through their own actions. Our decisions carry responsibility.