

5 The number of illegal abortion-related deaths is exaggerated: Pro-abortion groups exaggerate the number of women who die of illegal abortion complications around the world. The most common figures used are 78,000; 200,000; and half a million annually. A review of the sources for these figures reveals that they do not have solid evidence behind them. The actual number is probably closer to 2,000 deaths worldwide annually due to illegal abortions.⁷

6 Maternal death rates are often lower where abortion is outlawed: In fact, countries that have strict limits on abortion — and where laws against abortion are enforced — often have much lower maternal mortality rates than those nations with legal and common abortion. According to *The Lancet*, Ireland and Poland, countries where abortion is highly restricted, have rates of 6 per 100,000 and 7 per 100,000 births, respectively; whereas the United States has a rate of 17 per 100,000; and Russia, with one of the world's highest abortion rates, has 34 deaths per 100,000 births.⁸

Notes

1. Michele Munz, "Why Are So Many U.S. Women Dying During Childbirth?" *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 7, 2013, accessed November 24, 2014, http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/why-are-so-many-u-s-women-dying-during-childbirth/article_dd916b4b-38f0-5bae-ba42-ddee636e4cf4.html

2. Lisa Koonin, et.al. "Abortion Surveillance; United States, 1996," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 48 (1999).

3. William F. Colliton, ed., "A Pro-Life Medical Response to ACOG's January 1990," *Public Health Policy Implications of Abortion* (Stafford: American Life League, 1991).

4. Alan Guttmacher, "Abortion Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," *The Case for Legalized Abortion Now* (Berkeley: Diablo Books, 1967), 9.

5. C. Everett Koop, *The Right to Live, the Right to Die* (Toronto, Canada: Life Cycle Books, 1981), 61.

6. Associated Press, "Violence Against Pregnant Women is Not Uncommon," April 25, 2003. Reprinted by *The Catholic Exchange*, May 5, 2003, accessed November 24, 2014, <http://catholicexchange.com/violence-against-pregnant-women-is-not-uncommon>.

7. Brian Clowes, "Are There 'Exceptions' For Abortions?" in *The Facts of Life* (Front Royal: Human Life International, 2001), 181–204.

8. Margaret C. Hogan, et.al., "Maternal Mortality for 181 countries, 1980–2008: A Systematic Analysis of Progress Towards Millennium Development Goal 5," *The Lancet* 375 (2010): 1609–1623, accessed November 23, 2014, doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(10)60518-1.

See Table 3, "Maternal Mortality Ratio (uncertainty interval) Per 100,000 Live Births by Region and Country."

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PRO-LIFE TALKING POINTS

DOES LEGAL ABORTION SAVE LIVES?

Abortion is not, and never has been, an effective solution to authentic maternal health problems.



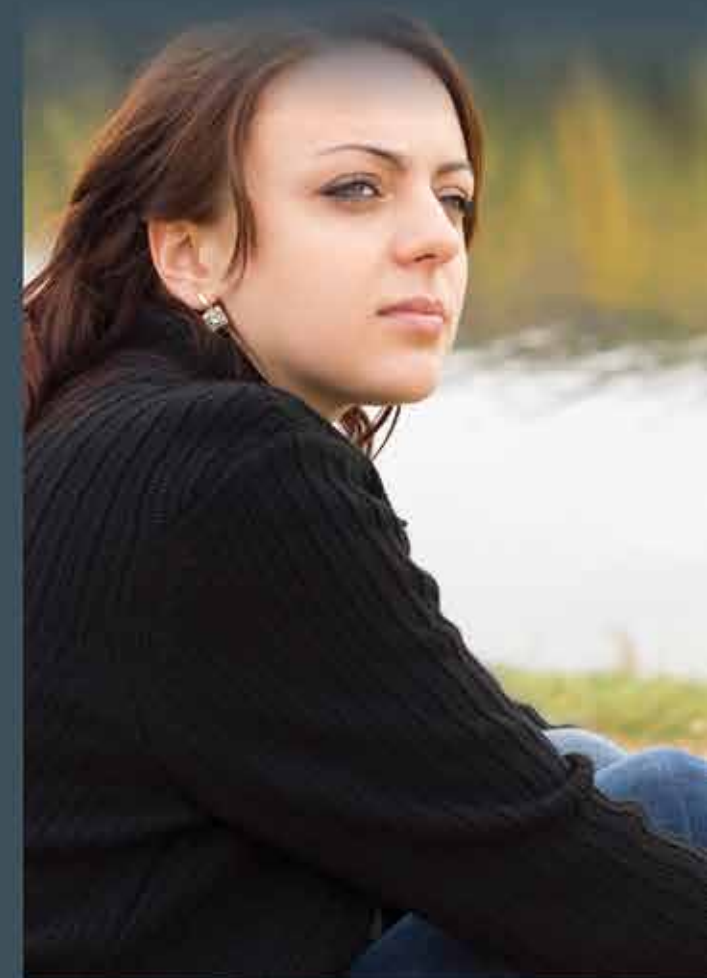
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Does Legal Abortion Save Lives?

1 Abortion-on-demand has not saved women's lives: Pro-abortion politicians and groups argue that without easy access to abortion, substantial numbers of women would die through illegal, unregulated, and unsafe “back alley” abortions. They say that this number of deaths would be greater than the current number of deaths of women caused by the over 1 million legal abortions per year in the United States, and thus that the abortion-on-demand rules imposed by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Roe v. Wade* in 1973 save women's lives. The evidence shows, however, that death from abortion in the United States was very rare before abortion was legalized, and that maternal mortality rates had been dropping steadily for decades in the 20th century, with abortion providing no clear benefit in terms of maternal health.¹

2 The number of women who died from illegal abortions before Roe was greatly exaggerated: Dr. Bernard Nathanson, a former abortionist who performed tens of thousands of abortions and one of the founders of the National Abortion Rights Action League: Pro-Choice America (NARAL), admitted that he and other NARAL members used to claim that 5,000 to 10,000 women died each year

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from illegal abortions. He has since admitted that he knew the statistic to be “totally false . . . But in the ‘morality’ of our revolution, it was a useful figure, widely accepted, so why go out of our way to correct it with honest statistics?” In 1972, the last year before *Roe v. Wade* was handed down, approximately 90 women died from abortions gone wrong, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Reproductive Health.²

3 Positive trends in maternal health are due to advances in technology: Progress in medical science in the last few decades, not the widespread practice of legal abortion, has produced declines in maternal deaths. Fortunately, prenatal care, anesthesia technology, antibiotics, and OB-GYN training have all improved since 1972, as Nathanson pointed out.³ As early as the 1960s, progress in technology had led to the point where abortion was no longer needed to save women's lives, if it ever was. Even Alan Guttmacher, who did more to promote and spread abortion on demand throughout the world than any other individual, commented in 1967, “Today it is possible for almost any patient to be brought through pregnancy alive, unless she suffers from a fatal disease such as cancer or leukemia, and if

so, abortion would be unlikely to prolong, much less save the life [of the mother].”⁴ Former Surgeon General of the United States Dr. C. Everett Koop said, “The life-of-the-mother argument surfaces in every debate concerning abortion. The fact of the matter is that abortion as a necessity to save the life of the mother is so rare as to be non-existent.”⁵

4 Legalized abortion has led to more maternal deaths in indirect ways: While total deaths due to abortionist incompetence

have probably decreased in the United States thanks to better technology and training, maternal deaths due to other abortion-related causes have increased dramatically. At least three major studies have shown that the most common cause of fatalities among pregnant women is murder, and statistics show that almost one third of these are due to men who kill their wives or girlfriends because they refuse to get an abortion. This amounts to 30 to 50 murders per year.⁶



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