

Letter: Prohibit abortion later than “salvageability”

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I was an intern physician training in Colorado Springs from 1983 to 1984. On my OB/GYN rotation we gave a short duration anesthetic while women had abortions. Most of these procedures were no more than 10 minutes in duration.

The one that I will always remember was one on a 27-week pregnancy that I was doing anesthesia for. Most abortions up to 10 to 12 weeks were, again, very quick, and all that was removed was unformed tissue.

This abortion was much different. Instruments were inserted into the uterus to cut up the body and crush the skull. The skull at 27 weeks is very calcified. The crushing of the skull sounded like stepping on an empty walnut shell. The procedure took 20 to 25 minutes.

My thought at the time was that we just killed a human being. At that time in medicine, a 20-week-old fetus was “salvageable,” in that in a NICU (neonatal intensive care unit) had a reasonably high chance of surviving. The cost was \$2- to 3-million, many of them, however, were neurologically “intact” and progressed to normal childhood.

I don’t know what the exact fetal age they can now “salvage,” but we know it remains at least 20 weeks, if not less.

So, if we can salvage a 20- or less week fetus, why is it legal to allow abortion after that time? And, for sure, how can it be legal to allow a live birth to die after delivery under the guise of “abortion?” Every moment after “salvageability” the fetus is becoming more “human” and more salvaged and developing as a “human.”

Many residents in nursing homes are in vegetative states to one degree or another, and becoming less “human” steadily if measured by mentation, independent thought, etc., not reacting to anything except sharp stimuli, yet they are totally cared for until death.

How can we care like this for those heading away from being “human” and not those heading towards being more “human” with each passing moment?

You cannot judge by human shape, as the fetus and the very elderly in this case not only are of human form, but in the “fetal position.”

I would propose no elective abortions after the age of “salvageability” as determined by NICU measurements as above unless the mother’s life is in danger.

There are a lot of couples who want to adopt. If you have waited until the 18th or 20th week of pregnancy to abort, you should not be allowed to legally abort as you are killing a developing human as described above.

Abortion for rape, incest and severe genetic abnormalities should always be legal, but should still be limited as above, ideally at least.

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