

# In Defense of Our Rights In Defense of Our Lives

For years now, the anti-abortion movement, led primarily by white fundamentalist Christian men who will never need an abortion, has fought a vicious battle in the courts, in congress, and in the streets to enforce their morality on the rest of the country. Their goal is the full criminalization of having or providing an abortion in the United States under any circumstance. The reality that this purportedly “pro-life” movement omits is that the banning of abortion does not reduce the rate at which women seek abortions. In fact, in a number of South American countries where abortion is outlawed, abortion rates are actually higher than in the United States. What illegal abortion does decrease significantly is rate at which women survive abortions. “Pro-life” indeed.

Having been unable to fully criminalize abortion in the US, the anti-abortion movement has successfully placed as many obstacles in the way of women seeking abortions as possible, from banning Medicaid funding of abortions to mandatory waiting periods before receiving an abortion. Again, their efforts have failed to significantly decrease the rates of abortions, though the legislation does have grave implications. Since 87% of counties don't have abortion providers, working women who seek abortions must get 2 days off of work instead of one, because mandatory waiting periods require them to receive anti-abortion propaganda 24 hours before they can get an abortion. Also, poor women that can't use their Medicaid money for an abortion must delay their abortion while they save up the money. Instead of having an abortion in the first weeks of pregnancy, women seeking abortions must wait to get the



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money or get the extra time off work, leading to a dramatic rise in late-term abortions, more dangerous for the women and more abhorred by the anti-abortion movement.

Where legislation has failed, the anti-abortion movement has taken matters into their own hands, protesting outside clinics and harassing and intimidating the women seeking medical services, as well as the employees. Some anti-abortion people have gone so far as to bomb abortion clinics and murder doctors who provide abortions, feeling that God is on their side.

It is no longer just abortion that the Christian fundamentalist movement opposes. They now seek to keep women from receiving basic reproductive medical information and affordable reproductive health care by lobbying against and protesting outside Planned Parenthood clinics that provide such sinful and dangerous services as contraception, cancer screening, pregnancy testing and STD testing. Where the light of technology and education shines to make women's lives safer and freer, the Christian fundamentalists run in waving the Bible intent on blowing the light out.

The anti-abortion movement is not about life, as they would like the country to think; it is about control. It is education, freedom, and equality that foster life, not ignorance, sexual hierarchy and oppression. We affirm the right of women and all people to make the decisions that affect their health and their lives, and we will defend these rights by any means necessary.

**Houston Anti-Racist Action**

PO Box 667536  
Houston, TX 77266  
houstonara@yahoo.com

**Central Texas Anti-Racist Action**

PO Box 6808  
Austin, TX 78762



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