

What Are the Facts?

Frequently Asked at Justice For All Events

Note: Justice For All staff and volunteers aim to create dialogue with members of the campus community about the issue of abortion. For us, dialogue is one key to solving the abortion controversy in our culture. Dialogue doesn't mean that we agree on everything, but it does mean that we seek to ask questions with an open heart, listen to understand those who disagree with us, and find common ground whenever possible. In seeking this sort of dialogue, we've found that members of the campus community regularly ask certain factual questions that are not fully addressed in the Justice For All Exhibit and Exhibit Brochure. The purpose of this document is to provide answers to those questions, using sources most people in the campus community respect, in order to make our dialogue about the moral and legal aspects of abortion more productive. If we can agree on a few facts, we believe this common ground can lead to finding other areas of agreement. We believe this will also illuminate the areas where we disagree, areas that need more discussion. If you're reading this page right now, why not ask a Justice For All staff person what he or she thinks about abortion? We guarantee that you will be pleasantly surprised at the dialogue that results. If you don't experience that sort of dialogue, please fill out a JFA response card and we'll do our best to make things right.

—Stephen Wagner, Executive Director, Justice For All

1. How many abortions are performed in America?

Source: Jones RK et al., *Long-term decline in US abortions reverses ...*, supplemental data tables, 2022 (accessed 2022-08-20: www.guttmacher.org/article/2022/06/long-term-decline-us-abortion-reverses-showing-rising-need-abortion-supreme-court)

Length of Time	Number of Abortions Performed
Annual (USA)	Approximately 930,160 *
Daily **	Approximately 2,548
Since you started reading this piece of paper (12 seconds)*	Approximately 1

* 2020 (United States)

** Note: These calculations are approximate. To calculate, we arbitrarily assumed abortions are done 8 hours a day, 365 days a year.

2. When in pregnancy is abortion legal?

In *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* (2022), the Supreme Court overruled *Roe v. Wade* (1973) and *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey* (1992). The syllabus of the opinion summarized the holding: "The Constitution does not confer a right to abortion; *Roe* and *Casey* are overruled; and the authority to regulate abortion is returned to the people and their elected representatives." [*Dobbs*, Syllabus, p. 1: "Held..." (https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/21pdf/19-1392_6j37.pdf)]

Since the *Dobbs* decision, various states have put in place laws and/or begun enforcing laws previously in place. See Guttmacher's interactive map (<https://states.guttmacher.org/policies>) for the best summary currently available of state policies.

JFA is uncertain of how the Court now views the definition of "health" put forward in *Roe*'s companion case *Doe v. Bolton* (1973). In *Doe*, "Health" was defined so nebulously that virtually any reason for abortion after viability can fit the definition, making the exception the rule. ["We agree with the District Court, 319 F.Supp. at 1058, that the medical judgment may be exercised in the light of all factors – physical, emotional, psychological, familial, and the woman's age – relevant to the wellbeing of the patient. All these factors may relate to health." (*Doe v. Bolton*, 1973)] We expect some states will continue to utilize it and some will ignore it.

3. What's the origin of each abortion picture on the Justice For All Exhibit?

Each of the pictures of aborted embryos and fetuses is used with the permission of the Center for Bio-Ethical Reform, the world's largest online library of aborted fetus and embryo photographs. According to CBR's website, the pictures were taken at "abortion clinics which perform elective pregnancy terminations." CBR warns that it is "preparing to take legal action against pro-abortion defendants who falsely accuse CBR of fraudulently altering pictures of aborted embryos and fetuses." CBR also possesses signed affidavits from a former abortion provider and from the photographer who took the pictures, attesting to the authenticity of the abortion photos and videos. For more information, see CBR's "Verifying Photograph Authenticity" page via the link at www.jfaweb.org/facts.

4. What do the ages on the Exhibit pictures mean?

Embryologists date the embryo or fetus from the time of fertilization. In one method, they measure the length from the top of the embryo's head to its behind ("crown to rump" length). Physicians, on the other hand, typically date pregnancy from a woman's *last menstrual period* (LMP). A woman's LMP occurs approximately two weeks before fertilization. Like pregnancy, abortions are typically dated from LMP. To avoid confusion, Justice For All uses the standard dating system of embryologists and calculates the ages of the embryos and fetuses on the Exhibit from the time of fertilization using "crown to rump" length as a guide. JFA does not use LMP dates on any of the Exhibit photos. *Example:* A woman whose pregnancy is dated at 12 weeks LMP is carrying a 10-week fetus. Therefore, the picture of the 10-week aborted fetus on page 9 of the Exhibit Brochure was the result of a 12-week abortion procedure.

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5. When in pregnancy are abortions performed?

Source: Jatlaoui TC, Boutot ME, Mandel MG, et al., “Abortion Surveillance—United States, 2015,” *MMWR Surveillance Summaries*, 2018, Vol. 67, No. SS-13, Tables 8-10 (www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/ss/pdfs/ss6713a1-H.pdf, accessed 09-19-19).

Period of Pregnancy (LMP)*	% of Abortions**	Est. Number, If Applied to 2020 Total (U.S.A.)
Before 9 Weeks	65.4%	608,325
Weeks 9-13	25.6%	238,121
Weeks 14-20	7.6%	70,692
After 20 Weeks	1.4%	13,022

* Remember JFA dates pictures of embryos and fetuses from conception/fertilization. Subtract two weeks from the above numbers to correlate.

** Note: Does not include data from 18 states and the District of Columbia. Among these are California, Florida, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, which together comprise more than 35% of US abortions (see www.guttmacher.org/statecenter/sfaa.html).

6. How are abortions performed?

Period of Pregnancy	Name of Procedure	Description and Source
Approximately 5-9 weeks LMP (3-7 weeks post-fertilization)	Mifepristone and Misoprostol, also known as “RU-486,” “the abortion pill,” and “chemical abortion”	According to the National Abortion Federation, “Mifepristone blocks the progesterone receptor, leading to changes in the endometrial blood supply...The net effect of mifepristone [is] detachment of the trophoblast from the uterine decidua...” See www.prochoice.org/health-care-professionals/educational-resources and navigate to <i>Medical Abortion / History and Overview / Mechanism of Action</i> . (Note: The trophoblast is the part of the embryo that connects the embryo to the uterus. It becomes the embryonic/fetal part of the placenta.) In other words, mifepristone reduces blood flow between the embryo and the uterus, stopping nutrition from reaching the embryo. The embryo dies as a result.
Up to approximately 12 weeks LMP (Up to approximately 10 weeks post-fertilization)	Vacuum aspiration, also known as “suction curettage” or “suction abortion”	“Cervix is gradually opened with tapered rods. A cannula (straw-like tube), which is attached to a suction apparatus (either an electric machine or hand-held syringe), is inserted through the cervix into the uterus. The contents of the uterus are emptied by suction.” (National Abortion Federation, “First-Trimester Abortion: A Comparison” www.prochoice.org/education-and-advocacy/about-abortion/abortion-facts)
Beyond approximately 12 weeks LMP (Beyond approximately 10 weeks post-fertilization)	Dilation and Evacuation, or D&E	This procedure was described in the U.S. Supreme Court Case <i>Gonzales v Carhart</i> (2007). “The doctor, often guided by ultrasound, inserts grasping forceps through the woman’s cervix and into the uterus to grab the fetus. The doctor grips a fetal part with the forceps and pulls it back through the cervix and vagina, continuing to pull even after meeting resistance from the cervix. The friction causes the fetus to tear apart. For example, a leg might be ripped off the fetus as it is pulled through the cervix and out of the woman. The process of evacuating the fetus piece by piece continues until it has been completely removed.” (www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/05-380.ZO.html , Section 1-A)

7. What reasons do women give for having abortions?

Source: Finer, et. al., “Reasons U.S. Women Have Abortions: Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives,” *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 2005, 37(3):110–118, Tables 2 and 3 (www.guttmacher.org/pubs/psrh/full/3711005.pdf)

Reason	% of women in 2004 who said this reason contributed to their decision to have an abortion	% of women in 2004 who said this is the most important reason for their abortion
Having a baby would dramatically change my life	74	4
Can’t afford a baby now	73	23
Don’t want to be a single mother or having relationship problems	48	8
Have completed my childbearing	38	19
Not ready for a(nother) child	32	25
Don’t want people to know I had sex or got pregnant	25	Less than .5
Don’t feel mature enough to raise a(nother) child	22	7
Husband or partner wants me to have an abortion	14	Less than .5
Possible problems affecting the health of the fetus	13	3
Physical problem with my health	12	4
Parents want me to have an abortion	6	Less than .5
Was a victim of rape	1	Less than .5
Became pregnant as a result of incest	Less than .5	-
Other	-	6
Total	-	100