

Why More Men Should Stand Up for a Woman's Right to Abortion

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Among the many reversals possible in a new Trump administration, few are more terrifying than the anticipated appointment of a Supreme Court justice who will vote to [overturn *Roe v. Wade*](#). Anti-abortion advocates have chipped away at woman's right to choose for decades, making [women's access to safe abortions](#) more difficult and [emotionally traumatic](#). Women now must often hurdle past gauntlets of [protesters](#) only to get access to doctors who are often required to ask demeaning and often insulting questions. This comes even as the Supreme Court in its last major decision on abortion — *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt* — [upheld *Roe's* validity](#).

But over four decades of debate have often been pitched as a “he vs. she” argument — male legislators and judges deciding what women can or cannot do. Of course, many women have lined up in the “pro-life” camp as well, with religious or moral objections to abortion. But still, the spectacle of an all-male line up testifying about [religious exemptions](#) to birth control coverage under the Affordable Care Act before Congress illustrates that debate.

Imagine, if you will, a two-by-two table, with “gender” (male and female) along one side and “pro-choice” and “pro-life” on the other. There would be women in both the pro-choice and pro-life camps. But I suspect we'd see men only on one side, in the pro-life camp. The table would be missing a fourth group: *pro-choice men*.

Why? Perhaps it's that men don't think women's reproductive rights have anything to do with them. It wouldn't be the first time that what are understood as “women's issues” turn out to also be issues that affect men. Take [parental leave](#), for example, it's a benefit that would be a [boon](#) to many men, too, but for too long it's been a woman's issue.

And it wouldn't be the first time in history that birth control itself was framed entirely as a women's issue. When Margaret Sanger founded the [American Birth Control League in 1921](#), which would later become Planned Parenthood, she wanted women to have access to safe and reliable birth control so they could be both workers and mothers. But even then, men benefitted from being able to more easily control the size of their family.

This needs to change. Stated most simply, men are stakeholders in the debate about women's reproductive rights. Consider the following examples:

- Fathers who already have three children, and fear they can't afford a fourth
- Guys who only “hooked up” with her last night, and have no interest in a relationship, let alone a baby
- Men whose careers are just starting and don't want a baby right now
- Compassionate partners who foresee lives of pain for babies who would be born with serious birth defects
- The friends, partners and husbands of those who have been sexually assaulted

Women's reproductive rights have everything to do with men, and offer almost as much freedom to us as they do to women. That's an important reason why we need to stand with women in this fight. Not only because reproductive freedom is right and fair, but because it is also in our best interests.

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