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## How Do We Make Cis Men Give a Shit About Abortion?

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By [Charlotte Shane](#) | May 22, 2019 | 5:20pm

[JusticePolitics](#)



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Illustration: Jim Cooke

Anti-abortion activists have been bashing away at abortion's legality and accessibility for decades, but the past two weeks have been especially dramatic. On May 15th, Alabama passed the most restrictive law in the nation, which would grant no exceptions for rape or incest victims; this on the heels of Georgia's so-called "heartbeat" bill that aims to ban abortions after six weeks, before the vast majority of people will even realize that they're pregnant.

Inside this maelstrom of terrible laws came Alyssa Milano's ill-conceived and not even real sex strike, which continued to show up in news stories and across social media as Missouri passed its own [near total abortion ban](#). Milano's announcement (which can be read in its original tweet form [here](#)) justifiably set off an avalanche of angry ([and witty](#)) rebukes, most of which lodged the same objections: such a strike is predicated on heteronormativity and gender essentialism; it positions sex as labor, as though we have sex with as our bosses; it doesn't account for the striker's own desire for sexual pleasure and intimacy; and it flirts with the conservative talking point that fertile cis women shouldn't have penis-in-vagina (PIV) sex unless they intend to carry any resulting pregnancy to term.

But Milano's reaction, uninformed, impulsive, and unhelpful as it was, pointed to something important that her critics, strangely, largely ignored.

Historically, the call for a sex strike addresses cis women who have vaginal sex with cis men. Cis women are not the only group of people who can get pregnant—nonbinary people and trans men can, too. But cis men, notoriously, cannot, no matter who they're fucking. This point (that cis men cannot get pregnant) should matter exponentially more than it does, which is not at all; the laws regarding abortion are, and for centuries have been, determined and enforced by cis men. This doesn't excuse anti-choicers who aren't cis men, especially not the primarily

cis women who terrorize, deceive, and harass abortion-seekers. The urge to depict anti-abortion policies as the exclusive work of old white men renders us unable to effectively fight white supremacy, class-based oppression, *and* the patriarchy.

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But we're similarly ill-served by equivocation. Because they wield an inordinate, unjust amount of political power, white cis men—who, may I remind you, cannot get pregnant—are the single biggest reason why abortion in the United States is unaffordable, stigmatized, intentionally difficult to obtain, and increasingly criminalized (as in recent instances of [self-induced](#) abortion.) If every cis man decided tomorrow that abortion was an inalienable human right, we'd be freed almost immediately from the hell of the Hyde Amendment and [TRAP](#) (Targeted Restriction on Abortion Providers) laws. If every cis woman decided tomorrow that she believed the same, we would still have a long, bitter battle ahead.

A sex strike is an inept attempt to highlight this fact, which should be a fundamental and inoffensive concept for anyone who calls themselves pro-choice. Cis men are the greatest enemy of abortion rights, and it's maddening that they monopolize so much energy and space while their actions belie their professed moral duty [to protect fertilized eggs](#). Abortion providers, along with anyone in possession of common sense, have long known that people who call themselves pro-life (sometimes the very people protesting outside the same clinic they'll use) don't hesitate to avail themselves, their wives, their daughters or [their mistresses](#) of the same medical procedure they'd like to outlaw.

As someone who has been pregnant and someone who could be again, I'm furious to know that the vast majority of cis men in my life just can't be bothered to do anything about abortion accessibility, not even when they've [benefitted from the procedure](#) in the past and may benefit again in the future. The men I know are, theoretically, pro-choice—even my Trump-adoring father has taken at least one reluctant woman (my mother) to get an abortion, yet [in true Republican form](#) never hesitates to vote for anti-choice candidates—but there's no urgency behind the position; their stance never manifests into any form of political action.

Cis men don't have to exist under the possibility of being forced to carry a life-threatening, life-altering pregnancy for nine months and then being forced to give birth. They don't have the specter of this biological conscription hanging over them whenever they have PIV sex, with the attendant anxiety nudging an orgasm just out of reach—according to [available research](#), no one has fewer orgasms during partnered sex than straight women. They don't even have [a legitimate fear](#) of being roped into onerous child support payments.

| Cis men Don't have the specter of this biological conscription hanging over them

What cis men *do* have is a network of impregnate-able people—family members, partners, coworkers, fellow organizers, and friends—who continue to love, cooperate with, and care for them, in spite of their complicity with this grotesque injustice. The majority of cis men don't care about the rights of people who can get pregnant: not enough to demand and vote for the

politicians who would protect them, not enough to agitate for immediate change, and not enough to lend even the most modest amount of practical support. (It's remarkable to see how few snarky, leftist media men deigned to retweet a link to an abortion fund, or write an original 280 characters about the developments in Alabama, Ohio, Missouri, and Georgia.)

Yet the overwhelming majority of straight cis men engage in, solicit, expect, demand, and sometimes compel sex that can result in pregnancy. And if they were denied PIV sex from their partners, they might react in ugly, abusive, and violent ways. This tragedy is the anguished intuition underneath Milano's clumsy gesture, and it's also a crucial part of why such tactics would never work. We live with and among cis men who don't care about our oppression, the oppression they helped to create and still maintain, through action and inaction alike. Since they can't arrive at caring on their own, how are we supposed to "make" them care?

I don't have an answer for that—and no feminist, to my knowledge, has ever come up with one. But it's impossible to stop asking the question because it's inconceivable that we'll achieve reproductive justice without the close involvement of many cis men.

Solidarity can't be coerced from someone like they're a donkey being led by a carrot (or a cis man being led by a raging boner) but, with direct guidance, it might be awakened inside someone where it's dormant. There are advocates among us, including truly heroic [cis men](#), who've been working on abortion access for decades, [literally giving their lives](#) to the cause, and there are [concrete](#) and [immediate](#) ways we can support them. While we keep demanding the most from those speaking out—rigorously inclusive language; a refusal to code abortion as shameful and undesirable; an analysis that accounts for white supremacy, capitalism, and the predictable tyranny of anyone with ordinate power—we also need to make cis men around us as uncomfortable as we possibly (and safely) can. We've let them exempt themselves from meaningful involvement in the fight for reproductive justice for far too long.

*Charlotte Shane is a cofounder of TigerBee Press. Her next book, Tell Me You're Happy To See Me, will be released by Simon & Schuster in 2020.*

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## Scottish Fans Have Already Won the World Cup

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**The Tartan Army has brought more joy to Boston than a Dunkin' two-for-one special.**

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By [Josh Jackson](#) | June 15, 2026 | 2:27pm

Screenshot via X [SplinterSports](#)



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Whenever the Netherlands are involved in an international soccer tournament, the Oranje Legion brings the party, going so far as shipping a bright orange bus wherever they go. But at this year's World Cup, it's Scotland's Tartan Army that's clearly having the most fun.

After their team beat Haiti 1-0 on Saturday—singing their nation's anthem [loud enough](#) to be heard back home—Scottish fans took over Boston's Fenway Park last night and continued normalizing constant singing at American stadiums. Marching through the streets with a full team of bagpipers, the chanting and singing rarely ceased throughout the Red Sox' 6-4 defeat by the Rangers.

They were chanting.

The Tartan Army takeover of Fenway was unbelievable tonight

(via X/stephenquinntv) [pic.twitter.com/IJTHYkQHWn](https://pic.twitter.com/IJTHYkQHWn)

— FOX Soccer (@FOXsoccer) [June 15, 2026](#)

They were singing along to [Abba](#), [The Killers](#) and Baccara's 1977 banger "Yes Sir, I Can Boogie."

'Yes Sir, I Can Boogie!' 🎵

Scotland fans party at Fenway Park! 🇬🇧🇺🇦 [#BBCFootball](#) [#FifaWorldCup](#)  
[pic.twitter.com/npXco6OWSa](https://pic.twitter.com/npXco6OWSa)

— BBC Sport Scotland (@BBCSportScot) [June 15, 2026](#)

And they kept singing The Proclaimers' "I Would Walk 500 Miles" long after the music on the PA had ceased.

Please enjoy the musical stylings of Fenway Park. 😊 [pic.twitter.com/KaWAVe0HT6](https://pic.twitter.com/KaWAVe0HT6)

— NBC Sports (@NBCSports) [June 15, 2026](#)

While our leaders [don't deserve](#) the unbridled joy of thousands of strangers from faraway lands descending upon our shores to sing a forgotten Spanish disco song from the 1970s that's become their football team's unofficial anthem, thankfully we can still enjoy it. Tartan Army, keep boogying all night long.

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## The U.K. Is Banning Social Media for Kids. Can It Deliver More Effectively Than Australia?

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### Do any of the countries banning social media for kids actually have the guts to force tech companies into compliance?

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By [Jim Vorel](#) | June 15, 2026 | 11:27am

Photos via [Unsplash](#), [Berke Citak](#), [Bruce Mars](#) [SplinterTech](#) [social media](#)



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Amid World Cup fervor that is likely dominating news headlines across the U.K. this week, comes a Monday morning announcement from British Prime Minister Keir Starmer that carries some significant cultural weight: Britain will join other European and world nations [in employing a planned social media ban for children](#) under the age of 16. Specifically targeting “user-to-user platforms, whose purpose is to enable social interaction and which allow users to post material, alongside algorithms,” such a ban would take aim squarely at the likes of TikTok, Snapchat, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, while sparing messaging services like WhatsApp. The British government plans to get the bill in front of lawmakers before the end of the year, “with protections expected to come into force in spring 2027.” The obvious question: Can Britain make such a ban stick in a way that conveys real benefit to the country’s youth? And can it do it in a way that proves more effective than the somewhat toothless child social media ban in Australia that became the world’s first of its kind six months ago?

“The changes will back parents grappling with the risks for children that come from the online world and help empower them by providing a clear decision on what is safe and age-appropriate for children,” [said Starmer](#) in a statement. The British PM went on to claim that the UK’s legislation will go “further than any country in the world” in the ban’s scope and enforcement, including “world-leading blocks on harmful functions such as livestreaming and stranger communication with children for under-16s. Taken together, these measures will mean a much more comprehensive model than just a blanket ban on social media—one that responds to how children experience harm online, rather than just where it happens.”

The U.K. ban on social media accounts for children younger than 16 is just the latest in what has become [a percolating global wave](#) of similar legislation—even in the United States, more than half the individual states [have taken steps toward such a ban](#), although always facing extremely stiff resistance from the industry’s biggest tech giants. In Europe, Spain vowed to protect its children from the “digital wild west” by [enacting a ban in February](#), although there isn’t yet any data on its effectiveness, while Malaysia started enforcing its own ban just this month. France, Norway and Denmark and Greece are all in the midst of working toward their own bans—but all follow the outline of Australia on some level, as it became the first major nation to attempt to institute and enforce a ban for kids younger than 16, starting in December of last year. That one has been in effect long enough to get some data from Australia eSafety Commission, and suffice to say it seems to be of relatively limited impact so far.

According to the eSafety Commission’s data, a survey of 898 parents of children aged 8-15 conducted in January and February found that seven of 10 kids who possessed social media accounts before the ban started still had their accounts, having found loopholes and ways around the ban. Said “loopholes” could be as simple and stupid as [a kid literally drawing a mustache](#) onto their face for an age estimation scan, or simply creating a new account with a fake birthdate. At the same time, some accounts of children younger than 16 reportedly just kept working as if nothing had happened.

“While there are fewer under-16s with social media accounts than there were four months ago, it is clear significant numbers of children aged under 16 are still on social media,” the eSafety Commission concluded in its March report.

It is easy to joke, or to dunk on the seeming lack of enforcement of such toothless legislation, because *of course* the most determined kids will find a way back on to the addictive social networks they have been weaned on at a young age. At the same time, however, I do feel we should note that “7 in 10 are still on social media” is a framing effectively ignoring that even a relatively toothless ban did seemingly work in getting the remaining 3 in 10 kids *off* social media services a few months after the ban went into effect, and if extrapolated out to the entire Australian population is the sort of thing that could still have measurable cultural benefit. We are talking about millions of kids and parents who altered their typical behaviors in accordance with the new law, an outcome I actually see as at least somewhat optimistic.

That said, more effective enforcement of such a ban would require the country putting it into effect to actually follow through on its vows to hold tech companies accountable—otherwise, said tech giants will have little to any impetus to comply. The Australian law puts the burden of enforcement on those tech companies under the threat of fines for non-compliance with the new regulations (such as allowing children to skirt the law), but to date, no fines have actually been issued. They still could be in the future, however, as the Australian eSafety Commission [says it still has](#) “ongoing investigations into five of the 10 platforms covered by the law for noncompliance — Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube — and said it would decide on enforcement actions by the middle of the year.” One wonders, how big a fine would be necessary for the likes of Meta to give a shit about making their age gates more effective?

In the U.K., technology secretary Liz Kendall claimed that Britain would learn from the sluggish enforcement of the Australian ban by instituting steps that “make it far harder for children to bypass safeguards,” while also working with the U.K.’s communications regulator Ofcom on a compliance strategy for the tech companies.

“The government must continue to put pressure on Big Tech and not let them off the hook,” [said Chris Sherwood](#), CEO of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, to CNN. “We want to see Government go further, be bolder and make sure there is real accountability across all online platforms, gaming services, and AI chatbots so the transformational change children and parents need and deserve becomes a reality.”

To do that, frankly, they’ll probably have to make it hurt for the likes of Meta, TikTok or Twitter/X, and make it hurt badly—and the same government is [so caught up in AI investment already](#) that there may be no extricating them from the financial/technological entanglements. But it’s a case where governments will need to lead, because we obviously can’t rely on said social media companies to weigh in on such a topic in good faith, when it concerns their inherent ability to gain and monetize users. A Meta spokesperson can warn that bans will simply drive kids toward more dangerous “unregulated alternatives,” but this is the knee-jerk response of a company where profitability is being threatened, not the warning of some altruistic nonprofit. At least in Australia, 3 in 10 kids who had social media accounts may not have them any more. That’s probably not enough to reshape a generation, but it could be the start of an important reframing of how we allow the most impressionable in our society to interact with the digital world while their brains are still developing fast. Here’s hoping that Spain and France, the U.K. and even the United States can improve on these modest results in throwing off the yoke of social media’s cultural centering.

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## John Oliver Introduces the Small Election That Could Change the Future of British Politics

By [Drew Gillis](#) | June 15, 2026 | 9:27am

[NewsTV](#)



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The last four years have seen the Brits swap out their prime ministers with a frequency that would probably leave most Americans envious. Boris Johnson gave way to Liz Truss, who led to Rishi Sunak, who led to Labour's Kier Starmer, who has quickly lost popularity after assuming the office in July 2024. As John Oliver explains on last night's [Last Week Tonight](#), this Thursday will see a by-election in the small area of Makerfield, about halfway between Liverpool and Manchester, engineered to elect Andy Burnham, the sitting mayor of greater Manchester, to Parliament, where he can then challenge Starmer.

On a national level, the British political system is seeing more far-right candidates, both in the Reform Party, led by Brexit evangelist Nigel Farage who has suddenly come into some political funds, and the Restore Britain Party, which has openly courted neo-Nazi and has earned online praise from Elon Musk. "With Reform on the rise and Restore pulling it even further to the right, Britain risks heading in a very dark direction. And, at least in the immediate future, the only party positioned to stop that slide is the one currently in power, Labour," says Oliver. And

Burnham is actually the most popular politician in Britain, per the poll Oliver cites, managing a 35% approval rating. Burnham also hasn't lived in the Makerfield district, with some residents not incorrectly pointing out that he's a bit of a carpetbagger (as we would say in the States).

“So what happens next? Well, someone is clearly going to win this Thursday's election,” says Oliver, citing another poll suggesting that Labour is currently in the lead. “Even if Burnham does win and is then able to unseat Starmer, he'll still face the same dismal economy and the same furious voters with only three years to figure out how to deliver the change that Starmer couldn't before facing elections in 2029.” Check out the whole segment below.