

New laws steal women's freedom of choice

Meredith Veto
Staff Writer

Roe v. Wade has never been so dangerously challenged as it has in recent weeks. Two laws signed by President Bush, the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act and the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, treat women as though they are casual onlookers of their own pregnancies.

The Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, signed by Bush in November, legislates against all second-trimester abortions. According to the government, the law ends an "inhumane" practice that causes pain to the fetus—the procedure punctures a fetus's skull outside of the womb in order to remove it safely.

Testifying in opposition to the law are several distinguished doctors, who unanimously state that there is no harm to the fetus and that in most cases it is safer for the

mother to abort than to continue the pregnancy.

Bush's tendency to ignore the opinions of knowledgeable medical professionals is threatening women's health, not only with abortion issues. By funding "abstinence only" education, which is found by numerous studies to be less than effective, it's possible that Bush is creating the same problem that he is attempting to outlaw.

The details of partial-birth abortion may be gruesome, but it's clear that medical professionals find no indication that the fetus experiences pain. In fact, New York Dr. Amos Grunebaum testified that he "would go to prison for doing a procedure I consider safer."

Women who have abortions are often demonized, called lazy for undergoing a procedure that could have been prevented. But this is one of the largest misconceptions

about partial-birth abortion. Most women have these abortions because the fetus has abnormalities and it is safer to remove it than to give birth.

Grunebaum emphasized that the majority of women who undergo the procedure in the second trimester of their pregnancies "really, really, really wanted to have a baby."

This particular abortion procedure also helps preserve the fetus as intact as possible. "It is the same as any baby dying," Grunebaum said. "People want to hold the fetus." This has therapeutic effects for the woman—studies show that women grieve less after a failed pregnancy if they get to see the fetus.

The Unborn Victims of Violence Act, signed April 1, was inspired by the Laci Peterson case. The law says that a person who commits violence against a pregnant woman will be charged with

two separate crimes, one for the mother and one for the fetus.

There is no doubt that all legislators consider violence toward pregnant women a heinous crime. But because the law made specific stipulations giving rights to a fetus, no matter what stage of development, it was not solely aimed at increasing punishment for such acts of violence. If that were the legislators' intent, they might have passed an amendment introduced by California Democrat Dianne Feinstein, which states that defendants can be charged with the offense of harming a fetus without granting rights to the fetus itself.

"Violence against women, including pregnant women, is a significant problem in America, one that should be addressed," said Gloria Feldt, president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. "This bill does not-

ing but shift the focus away from real solutions by undermining women's health and reproductive freedoms."

By giving rights to the fetus, the law is in direct conflict with Roe v. Wade. If killing a fetus is murder, according to the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, then so is abortion. What's more, the law could potentially be used to prosecute a woman who harms or kills her fetus unknowingly.

The Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act is being challenged simultaneously in three courts: San Francisco, New York and Lincoln, Nebraska. If you feel that you are unable to sit passively while the courts debate, join other Guilford students in the March for Women's Lives on April 25 in Washington, D.C., to support women's rights before they have vanished altogether.

Call (336) 399-7168 for more information.

Matt Geiger: inner change is inevitable

Matthew Geiger
Columnist

As the school year winds down, I have come to have a unique perspective on things that comes from being a senior who will (god willing) be graduating this May. As with any experience, it is only natural to sit back and reflect on what type of legacy you are as an individual going to leave this campus.

Are people going to talk about you or the things you have done during your tenure at Guilford? Probably not, but that's okay.

The fact of the matter is that as the years go by, people are leaving, graduating, going insane or many other options that involve finding oneself.

Good work is forgotten, memorable nights trickle away from the memories and people in general are not remembered.

One of my first real vivid memories at Guilford was during CHAOS and there was some event going on the lawn outside of New Garden Hall; from a distance I saw something that would change my future at Guilford forever. Far off on the lawn, I saw a rather large man wearing a yarmulke and being Jewish. I felt a desire to introduce myself. That man's name was Mike Zarkin and he asked the magic question, "Do you want to be involved in Hillel." I said yes, and the rest, as they say, is history.

But the point of my article is not so much reflection; it is

change and understanding change. Over the course of the past four years I have changed, hopefully for the better. I do not want to speak for the rest of my classmates, but it is probably a fair assumption to make that most of them have changed too.

The message I want to send out to all of you today is that as soon as I and my classmates graduate, Hillel, *The Guilfordian*, and all the other organizations we have been active with on campus, stay on campus. What we take

with us is ourselves. When we first came to college we had changed throughout high school and now as we leave, we are changed college students.

We take that change with us, we take whom we are and what we will become in the future into the real world and that my friends, is a very scary thought.

I want to close this by saying that when I look back at the kind of person I was starting Guilford, I am amazed that I have, quite frankly, lasted this long. I feel that by being open to changes and understanding that improvement and alterations to myself can

almost always be helpful, being modestly successful at Guilford like I have, was a little bit easier.

Change however is not just limited to our own person. We will go out into this world and see changes that we feel need to be made so that our world can be a better place to live in. I say this: work towards change, fight for progress. We need to change as the earth changes around us, and by doing so chances for success are high.

Right or wrong, history judges by what we do and what we choose not to do. Hopefully, when we sit back and reflect upon our life experiences, what will remain of us are love and all the good we have done to the world around us.

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~ Matt Geiger