



New York State: Reproductive Health Act

Last week, New York State amended its laws regarding abortion. Some of this language codified into state law what is already covered by the Roe v. Wade case (1973), and protected the legal right to an abortion for nearly total permission past 24 weeks pregnancy. There are other issues, which I encourage you to read about.

The decision to end a pregnancy faces many social, financial, and health pressures. We should have deep care for anyone who finds themselves in this difficult position.

And yet the church's position is clear: Abortion takes a life that is given by God. The canons (laws) of the Anglican Church in North America state: "God, and not man, is the creator of human life. The unjustified taking of life is sinful." The Roman Catholic bishop of Albany wrote an open letter to one of his parishioners, Gov. Andrew Cuomo, regarding the new legislation: "Allowing late-term abortions is nothing less than a license to kill a pre-born child at will."

If you or someone you know is considering an abortion, please speak with me. There are other options and lots of resources, and so many of us are ready to walk with you through them. If you have had an abortion, you – like all of us – have a loving Father in heaven who wants your healing. I will not be shocked by your words: do not walk in shame alone.

The church does not often speak out on specific legislation. Of course, we have a gospel that reaches to every part of life, including politics. We are deeply committed to the working out of Christian principles throughout your life, but the institutional church in itself does not always have the expertise to lay out a full agenda. This is why, for example, we hosted a Nickel City Forum event on Health Care and Justice, to help people apply Christian values with respect to the complex world of public policy. (You should also check out our diocese's yearlong conversation on immigration.) But sometimes an issue like abortion presents with moral clarity, irreversible destructive force, and the magnitude of 50 million lives over the last 46 years.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me about this. We cultivate in our church healthy and respectful conversations on difficult issues: there are many other people here who would love to talk to you with the care and honor these issues deserve.