

Lesser of two evils: Which candidate's policies support the greater good?

Recently, I read an article by Rebecca Bratten Weiss, a guest writer for National Catholic Reporter (9-20-2024), which makes a lot of sense to me. Some of the following thoughts are borrowed from her research and reflections.

First, let me say, in a black and white, right and wrong world, I do not support the willful taking of the life of an unborn child.

But in a world where real life situations come into light, there is more gray than black and white.

So, what is the best way to protect the life of the unborn and the mothers who carry children in their wombs. Weiss emphasizes that we need to look at the policies that are in place that provide good health care coverage and adequate financial support for low-income families. Rather than simply base my vote for a candidate on their personal stance on abortion or non-abortion, I look for policies that support life, and ones that offer an affordable and just means for choosing life for the unborn as well as the means to support that life from childbirth to adulthood and beyond.

“But what about abortion?” asks Weiss. “This is the argument I heard for years. No matter how terrible a Republican candidate was, we still had to support them, because of abortion. No matter how strong a Democratic candidate was on the economy, health care, just war, capital punishment, immigration or other life issues, we still had to oppose them, because of abortion.

Weiss offers another way to think about the issue. Here is what she shares:

“Anyone who is serious about reducing abortion rates will focus on building a strong economy that serves the working and middle classes, with robust safety nets and accessible, affordable resources.

“Politicians who are ignorant about women's bodies – and unaware of the many complicated, deeply personal, often traumatizing situations women face in reproductive health – think they can make abortion go away simply by denying access. But they can't. Abortion will not vanish because of bans, even when those bans come with heavy penalties. Studies indicate that abortion rates in nations where it is legal and nations where it is illegal are

about the same. What appears to be a greater driver of abortion rates is income level.

“But even if one is fixated on abortion to the neglect of every other issue, it makes sense to vote for policies that functionally reduce abortion versus just ideologically condemning it.”

My conclusion, then, is rather than basing who I vote for or how I vote on Amendment 3 on the Missouri ballot, I seek to support candidates and amendments that offer policies that will provide better health care for women, that support a stronger economy that benefits the lower income families and the working middle class, that includes raising the minimum wage, stopping corporate price gouging, expanding the earned income tax credit, expanding the child tax credit and other policies that protect lower income and middle-class families. Where there is hope, there is the better possibility to choose life.

Compiled by Lucy Meissen --