

Abortion: For the Kids or Against the Kids?

Does anyone remember watching Romeo and Juliet in freshman year of high school and was shocked when there was nudity in the PG film? Was anyone else also shocked when we read Brave New World in high school and how much sex was in the book and in so many of the other books we read? Boys and girls hit puberty around 13 years old. That's the start of when children begin to be curious about sex. Their bodies are transitioning to where they are able to do a natural part of life and reproduce. So, is it good to expose sex to kids at a young age? Yes, it is a natural part of our lives, but what about when they start having sex? Who teaches them to have safe sex?

On September 1, 2021, Governor Gregg Abbott put into effect the Texas Heartbeat Act (SB 8). This new law banned abortions in Texas for fetuses once they have a detectable heartbeat, typically at around 6 weeks old. Teenage girls barely understand their own bodies at that age though and are still going through the stages of puberty. They are still having irregular periods and would not even question why they have not gotten their next period in 6 weeks, not even realizing that they might be pregnant and are too late to decide they want an abortion. From a study conducted by Lauren J. Ralph, an epidemiologist who focuses on women and childbirth, she found that out of over 60% of unplanned pregnancies, women find out that they are pregnant past six weeks of conception. This means that many parents of unplanned pregnancies no longer have the option of an abortion.

According to the CDC, the teen birth rate in Texas is 25.3 which means that about 25 out of 1000 teen girls in Texas are having a baby every year. Although this fraction looks small, that is tens of thousands of girls getting pregnant every year and the rate is extremely high compared to the birth rate of the U.S., which is 1.7. Additionally, in a survey conducted by the CDC in

2019, over 50% of teens that said they are sexually active reported not using protection during the last time they had sex. With the number of teens that are not having protected sex and are getting pregnant each year, there is also a proportional number of girls that are dropping out of school to take care of their kids. But many of these girls feel like they are not ready to take care of a kid. They too are still kids and are not even legal adults yet. What do they do if they get pregnant?

When I was a freshman in high school, barely a teenager, I could not fathom having a child. How many of you at 14 could fathom having a child? Given the situation, would you have appreciated that abortion is an option? And what about the mothers and fathers reading this, if your daughters were pregnant at 14, would you want your child to deal with the consequences of the lack of access to abortion for the rest of their life? The Texas Heartbeat Act takes away this option for pregnant girls who may not have the financial or mental abilities to take care of their pregnancy and future baby. Instead, the law pressures girls to take care of a kid when they are not ready to be mothers. With the new law, high schoolers, and even middle schoolers, can be forced to carry their baby to term. A child can be forced to have a child.

So, let's work together against this law in support of the daughters out there who would appreciate to have the option of an abortion. Support a place where girls are not forced to become women by having a child of their own and kids can stay kids for as long as they want.