

Backgrounder: Questions and answers about abortion in Canada

Does a woman have the right to choose abortion in Canada?

No, there exists no court-defined or Charter right to abortion in Canada. Abortion was first decriminalized in 1969. Prior to this, committing an abortion was a crime (homicide) under the Criminal Code. In *R. v. Morgentaler*, 1988, the Supreme Court of Canada made its landmark decision to throw out the 1969 abortion law on the basis that it was “unconstitutional,” ruling that the law’s detailed criteria for obtaining an abortion violated a woman’s Charter right to “security of the person.”

Neither the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms nor the Supreme Court of Canada established a right to abortion. The Supreme Court tasked Parliament in 1988 with creating a new law. This never happened, though an attempt was made in 1989 with the flawed Bill C-43 (An Act respecting abortion). Abortion in Canada still persists in a legal vacuum to this day, leaving the pre-born with no legal protection.

Is there such a thing as a “safe” abortion in Canada?

No, abortion results in the death of the child inside his or her mother’s womb. Abortion is never safe for the pre-born baby and poses serious risks to the woman’s physical and/or psychological well-being.

Is it only the woman’s body that matters when it comes to abortion?

No, there is also the body of the pre-born child that has DNA, brainwaves, and a heartbeat separate from the mother. If the child is male, he also has male testicles. His male organ cannot be part of the “woman’s body.” A new unique human life begins at conception, when sperm meets egg. The newly conceived human being needs only time and space for the miracle of his or her life to unfold. If a woman aborted her own body, she would be dead.

Should preborn children be protected in Canada?

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms states that “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person.” Canadian law deliberately excludes humans in the womb, stating that a child only “becomes a human being” when it has “completely proceeded [...] from the body of its mother.” This legal fiction is not only bad science, but it blatantly denies humanity to the pre-born, stripping them of their right to life. This is discrimination based on age and based on location. It is unjust. It is wrong. Because of this legal definition, abortion is permitted throughout all 9 months of pregnancy, for any reason or no reason whatsoever, up to the moment of birth.

Are there alternatives to abortion in Canada?

Yes, there is the option of adoption and there is also the option of parenting. There are about 150 pregnancy care centres across Canada to help women in numerous ways, including providing diapers, baby clothes, food items, housing, and a community that supports them. These groups exist to help meet pregnant women’s physical, emotional, legal, and spiritual needs throughout their pregnancy and following the birth of their child. They are a wonderful and needed resource in our country. Prime Minister Trudeau is moving to remove charitable status from these organization which could cripple many of them.

Do some women regret abortion?

Yes, there are groups such as [Silent No More Awareness](#) which provides a space where women who have had abortions tell their real-life stories about how it negatively impacted them. Numerous post-abortive women make clear the devastation that abortion brings to both women and men. There are many pro-life groups that seek to bring healing to post-abortive women who want help, such as [Rachel’s Vineyard](#) along with [Silent No More Awareness](#). Medical research organizations such as the [deVeber Institute](#) collect and publish information on the negative impact of abortion. Dismissing abortion regret is to ignore the lived experience of numerous hurting women.

Please check out Campaign Life Coalition’s Canadian Facts about Abortion webpage [here](#).