

**Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association  
RESOLUTION**

**RIGHT TO REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE**

1981

Given the recent U. S. Supreme Court decision to hear Webster v. Reproductive Health Services and the urging by anti-choice activists that the Supreme Court reconsider Roe v. Wade in that context, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association affirms its Right to Reproductive Choice Resolution.

Jewish tradition affirms the infinite value of human life and regards all human beings to be created in the Divine image. Our moral and legal traditions judge the decision to abort a fetus to be a most serious matter. Yet a survey of Halakhic (Jewish religious and legal) rulings over the centuries would yield several guiding principles: First, the definition of "human" life is associated with birth not conception. Second, the abortion of a human fetus, though a serious moral issue, is not judged to be murder. Third, that abortion is warranted indeed required when the fetus threatens the life of the woman. Fourth, in addition to physical health concerns, a woman's mental anguish may under certain rulings be viewed as a sufficient ground for abortion.

Moreover, Reconstructionist Judaism affirms the values of democracy, pluralism, and individual freedom in both Jewish and general life.

Therefore, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association opposes any legislation to make a woman's decision to abort a fetus an issue of public morality.

The Supreme Court has supported this latter view when, in 1973, it recognized that the decision about reproductive choice is a private one and effectively removed abortion from the realm of criminal law and made it a legal medical procedure.

Therefore, be it resolved: that the 1981 Annual Convention of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association goes on record as:

1. Affirming the right of American women to choose a safe, legal abortion;
2. Opposing the limiting of Federal and State funding of abortions for poor women;
3. Opposing those hospital policies and legal harassments that would limit access to abortion; and
4. Opposing anti-choice legislation, including any constitutional amendment that would make abortion illegal, a threat to both the Establishment and the Free Exercise Clauses of the First Amendment.

\* \* \* \* \*

In reaffirming this Pro-Choice Resolution, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association recognizes that the issue of reproductive choice is part and parcel of a large range of family policy issues such as sex education, childcare and family life programming.