

STATEMENT OF SCIENTISTS, MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ABOUT ABORTION'S EFFECT ON WOMEN

The United States Supreme Court stated in *Gonzales v. Carhart* that “it is unexceptionable that some women will come to regret their choice to abort the infant life they once created and sustained ... severe depression and loss of esteem can follow.” Abortion is a difficult and complex decision, because it has deep impact upon the woman, her own mental health and well-being, her physical health and well-being, her relationship with the child in utero, her relationship with her husband and/or relationship with her sexual partner, other family members, as well as society as a whole.

As a scientist, medical professional or mental health professional, I agree with the following conclusions about abortion:

THE FACTS

- 1) It is common for women to experience feelings of anger, fear, sadness, anxiety, grief, or guilt after abortion. The United States Supreme Court is correct that “some women come to regret their choice to abort the infant life they once created and sustained... Severe depression and loss of esteem can follow.”
- 2) Women’s reaction to these feelings vary considerably with their emotional coping abilities and pre-existing functioning. It is undeniable that significant numbers of women are injured by abortion and should not be ignored by the medical profession and that significant numbers of women suffer serious physical, mental or psychological trauma as a result of abortion.
- 3) The conclusion that there is a causal connection between abortion and negative problems is supported by three independent lines of evidence: (a) the self-attribution of women themselves, (b) mental health professionals who have successfully diagnosed and treated post-abortion reactions, and (c) statistically validated studies controlling for a large number of confounding factors which have been published in peer reviewed journals.
- 4) There is a significant body of research which demonstrates that abortion has harmful consequences for women. There is definite scientific evidence that supports this claim. The best scientific evidence to date suggests that a significant number of women who elect to abort suffer serious and enduring symptoms of anxiety, depression, trauma, suicidal behaviors, sleep disorders, and substance abuse disorders. This evidence must not be suppressed for any reason and should be provided to women as part of the abortion informed consent process. Peer reviewed research has shown that abortion is statistically associated with adverse mental health outcomes compared to women who have not elected abortion.¹

Signature _____ Date _____

(Credentials spelled out, no initials.)

Any particular experience with abortion summarized).

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- 1 Opinion of United States Supreme Court in *Gonzalez v. Carhart*, upholding the federal ban on partial birth abortion, citing The Justice Foundation Amicus Brief on behalf of Sandra Cano (the “Doe”) of *Doe v. Bolton* which created the abortion “health exception” and 180 Women Hurt By Abortion.
- 2 Coleman, P. K., Reardon, D. C., Rue, V., & Cogle, J. (2002). **State-funded abortions vs. deliveries: A comparison of outpatient mental health claims over four years.** *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 72, 141-152. Reardon, D. C., Cogle, J., Rue, V. M., Shuping, M., Coleman, P. K., & Ney, P. G. (2003). **Psychiatric admissions of low-income women following abortion and childbirth.** *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 168, 1253-1256. Reardon, D. C., Cogle, J., Ney, P. G., Scheuren, F., Coleman, P. K., & Strahan, T. W. (2002). **Deaths associated with delivery and abortion among California Medicaid patients: A record linkage study.** *Southern Medical Journal*, 95, 834-841. Coleman, P. K., Reardon, D. C., Rue, V., & Cogle, J. (2002). **History of induced abortion in relation to substance use during subsequent pregnancies carried to term.** *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 187, 1673-1678. Cogle, J., Reardon, D. C., & Coleman, P. K. (2003). **Depression associated with abortion and childbirth: A long-term analysis of the NLSY cohort.** *Medical Science Monitor*, 9, CR105-11. Coleman, P. K., Reardon, D. C., & Cogle, J. (2002). **The quality of the caregiving environment and child developmental outcomes associated with maternal history of abortion using the NLSY data.** *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines*, 43, 743-758. Coleman, P. K., Reardon, D. C., & Cogle, J. (2005) **Substance use among pregnant women in the context of previous reproductive loss and desire for current pregnancy.** *British Journal of Health Psychology*, 10, 255-268. Reardon, D. C., Coleman, P. K., & Cogle, J. (2004) **Substance use associated with prior history of abortion and unintended birth: A national cross sectional cohort study.** *Am. Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, 26, 369-383. Cogle, J., Reardon, D. C., Coleman, P. K., & Rue, V. M. (2005). **Generalized anxiety associated with unintended pregnancy: A cohort study of the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth.** *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 19, 137-142. Rue, V. M., Coleman, P. K., Rue, J. J., & Reardon, D. C. (2004). **Induced abortion and traumatic stress: A preliminary comparison of American and Russian women.** *Medical Science Monitor* 10, SR 5-16. Coleman P, Maxey CD, Rue VM, Coyle CT (2005). **Associations between Voluntary and Involuntary Forms of Perinatal Loss and Child Maltreatment among Low-Income Mothers.** *Acta Paediatrica*, 94 Coleman, P. K. (2006). **Resolution of Unwanted Pregnancy During Adolescence Through Abortion versus Childbirth: Individual and Family Predictors and Consequences.** *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*. Reardon, D.C., & Coleman, P. K. (2006). **Relative Treatment Rates for Sleep Disorders Following Abortion and Childbirth: A Prospective Record-Based Study.** *Sleep*, 29, 105-106. Coleman P, Rue VM, Coyle CT, & Maxey CD (2007). **Induced Abortion and Child-Directed Aggression Among Mothers of Maltreated Children,** *Internet Journal of Pediatrics and Neonatology*, 6 (2). Coleman, P. K., Rue, V., Spence, M., & Coyle, C. (in press). **Abortion and the sexual lives of men and women: Is casual sexual behavior more appealing and more common after abortion?** *International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology*.

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