

Supporting Women in a Post-*Dobbs* World

Birth Control's Failed Promises

Freedom from one's fertility and suppression of one's menstrual symptoms from using the Pill have come with two clear costs: an expectation that women accommodate themselves to the male-normative workforce, and few effective options to treat the root causes of **gynecological and menstrual issues** that plague millions of women around the world. In short, the pill has overpromised and underdelivered concerning the dual goals of improving women's health and meaningfully expanding women's economic opportunities.

Among the evidence-based risks and **side effects** of birth control are increased risk of blood clots (and through these, increased risk of heart attack and stroke); increased risk of certain cancers (chiefly breast and cervical cancers); increased risk of depression, anxiety, and suicide; loss of libido; osteoporosis and bone fractures; weight gain; irritable bowel syndrome; and increased risk of developing certain autoimmune disorders. Hormonal contraception has been found to prevent proper development of bone density during the years of adolescence and early adulthood, proper maturation of cervical tissue, development of certain parts of the brain, and maturation of breast tissue.

Hormonal contraception burdened women with the expectation that they would **function like men** in the workplace and in higher education. With widespread use of hormonal contraception and legalized abortion, pregnancy & motherhood became a lifestyle choice, rather than something that, especially in the case of married women, could be expected to naturally occur. Is it any wonder, then, that women are still fighting for fair maternity leave policies in the workplace, let alone paid maternity leave?

Hormonal contraception has also communicated that upon graduating high school, a woman must enter higher education and then immediately enter the workforce or graduate school, spending the next several years building up a career before considering starting a family. This is antithetical to **how female fertility works**; a woman is in the prime of her childbearing potential during her early and mid-twenties, a time of life when pregnancy health outcomes for both mother and child are best.

Birth control (and its backup, abortion) did not change the workplace to better fit women, but rather **changed women to fit the workplace**. In other words, accommodating mothers was never part of the script for equal-opportunity workplaces. Women would be allowed to enter higher education en masse and compete for all levels of workplace achievement as long as they played by the rules: **Be like a man**, don't get pregnant—and if you do, make sure you “take care of it.”

Imagine a world where workplaces and universities had to adjust to the reality of women getting pregnant,

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Women Should Remain Silent

Georgette Forney has become a powerful voice for those who like her “take care of it” but then go on to suffer remorse. “Abortionists are counting on women being silent so that no one will learn how badly they treat us, and how awful the procedure is.” In 2002, Forney went public with her remorse, standing alone on the steps of the Supreme Court after the March for Life, holding up a sign that read “I Regret Aborting My Baby.” Since then, she reports, her “Silent No More Awareness Campaign” has brought thousands of women—and men—together to share “their abortion testimonies,” including a substantial number who tell their stories every year on the steps of the Court. [from Forney Interview, *The Human Life Review*, Spring 2022]

An Embryo is Not a “Part” of the Mother

“The embryo is—in no way—a ‘part’ of the mother’s body. Science clearly defines ‘body part’ as a structure that shares the same genetic code as the rest of the body (like the appendix, arms, tonsils, or heart) and does not direct its own development. The unborn child has a completely unique genetic code. Half of the time it even has a different sex! It also directs its own development. So the embryo clearly is a separate living human being residing temporarily inside his or her mother. That’s the science of the matter.” That’s from p. 33 of Dr. Steven A. Christie’s new book, *Speaking for the Unborn: 30-Second Pro-Life Rebuttals to Pro-Choice Arguments*. Get a copy to help yourself make the case for life with succinct responses to several common pro-abortion arguments. (Emmaus Road, 2022, paperback, 168 pp., \$15)

Serena Williams: Motherhood Isn't Fair

In a recent *Vogue* article, tennis star Serena Williams said: “I don’t think it’s fair. If I were a guy, I’d be out there playing and winning while my wife was doing the physical labor of expanding our family.” She added: “I definitely don’t want to be pregnant again as an athlete. I need to be two feet into tennis or two feet out.”

In announcing her retirement, Serena Williams is grateful for both her enormously successful career & her family, and she has worked hard at both. But whether women think it's "fair" or not, we're the ones who get pregnant, carry & deliver children. This is the path for most women who want a child. It is natural and there is no use in pushing back against it or labeling it inequality. **Women, like men, are unique** in their physical, emotional, and mental strengths. One such strength is the ability to carry and bear children. That is a uniquely feminine trait; it



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Birth Control [continued]

rather than the other way around. A world where women not only had meaningful employment opportunities, but could enter them on their own terms. Perhaps women wouldn't delay childbearing for so long, and would have more children, relieving our clear demographic decline.

Perhaps, in such a world, young women would receive real help for their menstrual-cycle problems sooner, from restorative reproductive medical professionals seeking to treat the root causes of those issues, instead of entangling their patients in the vicious cycle of birth control symptoms and the antidepressants so often prescribed to mitigate them. To paraphrase both Pope Francis and the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, such a world would make it possible for women and their authentic, unadulterated feminine genius to be present wherever important decisions were being made. That is the world I want for my daughters. That is a world worth striving for. [excerpted from Grace Emily Stark, 6/9/22, humanlifereview.com/birth-controls-failed-promises]

Companies Cutting Parental Time Off

Many companies including Walmart will now pay travel expenses for women employees seeking an out-of-state abortion. One might conclude that these firms want "productive," i.e., non-pregnant women as employees. Better for their bottom line. As reported in the *Wall St. Journal* (8/23/22), new data show that many employers are offering fewer paid weeks of maternity and paternity leave: 35% this year compared to 53% of firms in 2020. Yet child care is one of the largest costs for most families.

"The declines might stem from companies changing their leave policies back to what they were in 2019 after extending more parental benefits to workers during the pandemic." Other benefits have not been cut: 99% of employers offer paid vacation, 96% offer paid sick leave, and 67% offers time off covering both. However, some firms are expanding parental leave benefits: Ferring Pharmaceuticals expanded paid parental leave to 26 weeks.

Pregnant, About to be Evicted

Rita O'Brien, executive director of Emmanuel House International (EHI) in Carmel, NY, has seen damage to its doors & its bank accounts hacked. Yet EHI continues to serve women in need. She explained: "What makes an unplanned pregnancy a crisis is what happens around it. So if there's domestic violence or substance abuse or unemployment, human trafficking, rape, etc., those are the inconvenient truths or the dark side that nobody on the pro-abortion side wants to talk about." More about this women's center & others around the country is found in a article by Susan Klemond (*National Catholic Register*, 8/14/22). These centers continue helping expectant women and families long after their babies are born.

She reports that "In the United States there are more than 5,300 federally funded women's health clinics providing comprehensive care and advertising women's health services, as well as more than 2,700 pregnancy

centers, compared to 585 Planned Parenthood locations, according to July data from the Charlotte Lozier Institute, which supports the cause of life through medicine, science and research." All Christians are encouraged to support their local pregnancy-help centers that are often the last resort for women in crisis pregnancy.

Serena Williams [continued]

should neither be co-opted by the transgender crowd nor reduced to a burden. As a mother of two young boys, I am well aware of the exhausting physical toll of pregnancy and labor, not to mention motherhood.

Pregnancy should neither be denigrated nor placed in that ever-growing list titled "unfair to women." As a woman, this is the body you inhabit. And carrying and nourishing a new life, though difficult and requiring some sacrifice, is a true privilege. There is nothing like parenthood. That men can't have children isn't a grand scheme against women; it's just reality. And success outside the home, however grand, pales in comparison to the wealth of bearing, raising, loving, & guiding the next generation. [excerpt, Kimberly Ross, *Washington Examiner*, 8/12/22]

New Film *Lifemark* Coming to Theaters September 9th

Based on the true story of a young man reuniting with his birth mother, starring Kirk Cameron and produced by the Kendrick Brothers, the movie celebrates the life-giving choice of adoption through the story of Louisiana native David Scotton and his family. Adopted as an infant, he grows up in a loving home. About to graduate high school, he unexpectedly receives a message from his birth mother, asking to meet him. The film is based on a true story, as told in the documentary *I Lived on Parker Avenue*. "We believe *Lifemark* will inspire countless people and churches at this pivotal time to get more involved in supporting life and adoption," executive producer Stephen Kendrick said.

Medical Help for Women

According to its website (<https://aaplog.org/>), the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists states: "We understand the need for absolutely accurate, scientifically irrefutable information. We are committed to serving you. We strive to provide you with a network of **prolife physicians** for mentoring and support and communication." When your editor checked for member physicians in high abortion states, he found four listed for New Jersey and two for New York. Given their population numbers, certainly additional doctors need to sign up in order to provide assistance to more women.

Just the opposite is happening at the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). It has absolutely no medical criteria for diagnosing "gender-dysphoria" except to agree with the self-diagnosis of the child. A doctor's letter to the *Wall St. Journal* states: "It is patently wrong to support preadolescent children's efforts to alter their genders when they are developmentally incapable of making such decisions."

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