



# STUDY GUIDE

## THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION ABOUT ABORTION

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**KEY TERMS:**    abortion            rights            fetus  
                          morality            murder

<b>NOTE-TAKING COLUMN:</b> Complete this section <i>during</i> the video. Include definitions and key terms.	<b>CUE COLUMN:</b> Complete this section <i>after</i> the video.
<p>Under what condition do almost all people agree that a fetus has great worth and the right to live, in fact so much so that it is codified into law?</p> <p>In regards to the fetus, what is wrong with the argument that 'a woman has a right to control her body?'</p> <p>What are some examples of when even those who are pro-choice would acknowledge that an abortion would not be moral?</p>	<p>Is ending the life of a human fetus moral? Why or why not?</p> <p>What are the differences in how an unborn human is thought of versus a human that has been born?</p>

## DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- What are some of the difficulties the average person faces in attempting to come to their own conclusion about whether to support abortions (in general) or not? What are some of the questions and arguments that proponents on both sides of the issue raise? Which side makes a more compelling case to you? Why?
- Should a fetus have value and rights? Why or why not? Sometimes, proponents of abortion argue that even if a fetus has rights, its right to live should be outweighed by the mother's right to not go through pregnancy and suffer the consequences of giving birth. Do you agree with this position? Why or why not? How should a fetus' rights, especially its right to live, be weighed (against any other rights of anyone)?
- Why do you think that the current condition exists – that society so values a born baby that killing it is legally considered murder, but that killing the same individual human before birth is in many places considered just as lawfully acceptable as squishing a bug (because the fetus is given an equivalent value to a bug by that same society)? Is your reasoning the same for the respective moral difference as well (in other words, how did society get to a place where killing a fetus is just as morally acceptable as, "...extracting a tooth," yet killing a baby is reprehensible and evil)? Should there be such a huge difference in how a human is treated and valued before birth versus after being born? Why or why not?
- After explaining that if a pregnant woman wishes to have an abortion, the fetus is not given much worth, but if a woman wishes to give birth and have the child, the child is given great worth, Mr. Prager asks, "On what moral grounds does the mother alone decide a fetus's worth?" How would you answer his question? Should a mother have exclusive say on whether the fetus has worth? Why or why not?
- Mr. Prager concludes the video by stating, "Good societies can survive people doing immoral things, but a good society cannot survive if it calls immoral things moral." What exactly does he mean by this? Do you agree? Why or why not?

## EXTEND THE LEARNING:

### CASE STUDY: Dr. George Tiller

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article, "5 Years After Dr. Tiller's Death, It's Still Dangerous To Be An Abortion Doctor," then answer the questions that follow.

- Why do you think that some people, who are against abortion because they supposedly value life, threaten and in some rare cases actually murder doctors and people who perform abortions? Aren't they hypocrites? What is problematic about the supposedly utilitarian argument that 'killing abortion doctors saves more lives in the end?'
- Why do you think that people who condone murdering abortion doctors think that killing the doctors will make a positive difference for their cause? Will it? Why or why not?
- Why do you think that some people who don't find the killing of unborn humans morally acceptable find the killing of abortion doctors morally acceptable? What's the difference? Is it a valid or significant difference? Isn't this an example of a segment of society calling an immoral thing moral?



# QUIZ

## THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION ABOUT ABORTION

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**1. Who determines whether a newborn child has worth and a right to live?**

- a. Mother
- b. Father
- c. No one
- d. Society

**2. Who determines whether a human fetus has worth and a right to live?**

- a. Mother
- b. Father
- c. No one
- d. Society

**3. When does nearly everyone believe that the human fetus has essentially infinite worth and an almost absolute right to live?**

- a. When a woman finds out she is pregnant.
- b. When a pregnant woman is 20 weeks along.
- c. When a pregnant woman has given birth.
- d. When a pregnant woman wants to give birth.

**4. A living being has to be a person in order to have intrinsic moral value and rights.**

- a. True
- b. False

**5. A good society cannot survive if it \_\_\_\_\_.** a. answer

- a. has people doing immoral things.
- b. has high crime rates.
- c. calls immoral things moral.
- d. calls moral things immoral.



# QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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<http://thinkprogress.org/health/2014/05/30/3443128/dr-tiller-five-year-anniversary/>

Health

## 5 Years After Dr. Tiller's Death, It's Still Dangerous To Be An Abortion Doctor

by [Tara Culp-Ressler](#)  May 30, 2014 12:13pm



Five years ago, Dr. George Tiller was [gunned down](#) by an anti-choice activist as he was attending church services in Wichita. His name remains one of the most prominent symbols of the potentially deadly consequences of radical anti-abortion activism. But although Tiller's murder [shook the nation](#) in 2009 — and led Attorney General Eric Holder to [dispatch U.S. Marshals](#) to protect abortion doctors across the country — his line of work hasn't actually gotten much safer in the years since his assassination.

“Threats, intimidation, and violence continue to be aimed at abortion providers,” Vicki Sapota, the president of the National Abortion Federation (NAF), said in an interview with ThinkProgress. “In some ways, we’ve been fortunate that more people who meant to do abortion providers harm were caught before they were able to do so... It’s still a very real problem here in the United States in 2014.”

It’s still a very real problem here in the United States in 2014.

Fortunately, there hasn’t been another murder in the past five years. But we’ve come close. In 2009, a Wisconsin man was [arrested](#) the night before he planned to go to a Planned Parenthood clinic and shoot an abortion doctor. The only reason he was taken into custody in time is because his gun misfired while he was cleaning it in a hotel room, and someone notified the cops. He [told law enforcement](#) that he wished he had a machine gun to “mow down” the clinic’s entire staff.

More recently, Julie Burkhart, the reproductive health activist who [re-opened Tiller’s former clinic](#) in Wichita, has been the subject of threats and harassment as local anti-abortion activists are [attempting to prevent](#) her from carrying on Tiller’s work. One abortion opponent was recorded as saying it would be a “[blessing to the babies](#)” if someone shot Burkhart and her staff. Another suggested that Burkhart was trying to [incite gun violence](#) by re-opening the clinic after Kansas passed a [concealed carry law](#) that that allows residents to carry hidden guns in public.

Aside from threats to their personal safety, abortion providers also continue to [face obstacles](#) to their professional success. This March, an abortion clinic in Montana was [forced to close](#) after it was completely destroyed in an act of anti-choice vandalism. It’s the second time that clinic owner, Dr. Susan Cahill, has faced this type of harassment — back in 1994, the clinic she operated was [fire bombed](#).

According to Saporta — whose organization works to [track incidences](#) of violence and harassment against abortion providers — there have been at least 61 acts of vandalism, 14 assaults, six arsons, and a bombing in the years since Tiller was murdered. There have been ten death threats.

The stakes are particularly high for the handful of doctors who continue to perform the same kind of later term abortion procedures that Tiller provided, a small group that was the [subject of a documentary](#) released last year. There are just [four doctors](#) who publicize their work in this area, and they’re [forced to go to great lengths](#) to ensure their safety — heightening security at their clinics, installing metal detectors, and even [relocating](#) across the country. The [threats and harassment](#) that late-term abortion providers face is one of the reasons why so few people are willing to offer those services.

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Reproductive rights activists [argue](#) that law enforcement and government officials have a responsibility to prevent abortion providers from becoming targets solely based on their line of work — especially since the country wouldn't tolerate this type of harassment against other type of medical professional.

“There needs to be a zero tolerance policy for violence against abortion providers in this country. Regardless of how people think about a woman's right to choose, violence is never warranted, and people can't try to justify acts of violence and terrorism,” Saporta pointed out.

There are some concrete policy solutions to help nudge the country toward that goal. In response to clinic violence, some cities and states have begun [enacting buffer zones](#) around their reproductive health facilities to keep anti-choice protesters at bay. For instance, after a gunman [went on a shooting rampage](#) at two Boston-area abortion clinics in 1994, killing two people and injuring five others, Massachusetts approved a 35-foot buffer zone.

“Buffer zones ensure that women and their health care providers can enter clinics safely and without intrusion into their private decisions,” Dr. Nancy L. Stanwood, the board chair of Physicians for Reproductive Health, said in a statement provided to ThinkProgress. “No one should be forced to endure harassment, violence, obstruction, or intimidation when they visit a medical facility.”

But Massachusetts' law is the subject of a current [Supreme Court challenge](#), and it's possible that it will be struck down, putting similar measures in other states in potential jeopardy. Dozens of reproductive rights groups, including the National Abortion Federation and Physicians for Reproductive Health, have [submitted an amicus brief](#) urging the court to uphold the policy.

That decision is expected to be handed down sometime later this summer. If buffer zones are invalidated, some clinic owners and volunteers predict there will be a [future upswing](#) in anti-abortion violence and harassment.

Their work on the dangerous front lines of this movement shows courage.

Despite the challenges, there are obviously still some medical professional who do continue to provide abortion care. Although they're not naive about the risks, they say they do it [because their patients need them](#). “Everyone who does the work we do can't forget the things that have happened, and the people who have been murdered and attacked. But I don't let it stop me from doing what I do,” one abortion provider from Florida told ThinkProgress in an [interview earlier this year](#).

“We salute, not only Dr. Tiller, but the many women and men who work tirelessly to provide abortion care for those in need despite the intimidating threats that surround them,” Ilyse Hogue, the president of NARAL Pro-Choice America, said in a statement to

commemorate the anniversary of Tiller's death. "Their work on the dangerous front lines of this movement shows courage and a conviction that should be admired."