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## Republicans on Choice, Family Planning, and Privacy

When it comes to the question of how to reduce the need for abortion, a 2007 poll by Peter D. Hart Research Associates revealed that the majority of Republicans support commonsense solutions in comprehensive sex education for teens and increased access to contraception. And many Republican leaders — at the local, state, and federal levels of government — are pro-choice and support family planning and age-appropriate sex education.

The following are highlights of what some leading Republicans have had to say — in the past and more recently — about choice, family planning, and privacy.

### ON CHOICE

**2007** — In defending the appointment of then-Republican Senator Arlen Specter (PA) to the Senate Judiciary Committee, **Senator Susan M. Collins (R-ME)** was clear in her view that there should be no litmus test about the right to choose on her party's leaders:

*I don't think there ought to be a litmus test for judges, but I also don't think that there ought to be a litmus test for chairmen. ... If we start requiring every senator to ascribe to a certain set of beliefs, they're not going to be able to fulfill their duties to their constituents.*

In "Senators Arlen Specter, Susan Collins and Chuck Hagel Discuss the President's Re-Election and How He Should Deal with Democrats in Congress." (2004, November 7). *Face the Nation*.

**2007** — As a Republican candidate for president, former New York City Mayor **Rudolph Giuliani** said:

*I believe the best way we can have common ground in this debate that you're hearing is if we put our emphasis on reducing abortion and increasing the number of adoptions, which is something that I did as mayor of New York City. But I think ultimately that decision that has to be made is one that government shouldn't make. Ultimately, a woman should make that with her conscience and ultimately with her doctor.*

Remark from the 2007 GOP Iowa Straw Poll Debate in OnTheIssues.org. "Rudy Giuliani on Abortion." (2007, accessed 2007, September 21). [Online]. [http://www.issues2000.org/2008/Rudy\\_Giuliani\\_Abortion.htm](http://www.issues2000.org/2008/Rudy_Giuliani_Abortion.htm).

**2006** — **Senator Lincoln Chafee (R-RI)** supported the right to choose throughout his career:

*I am a pro-choice, pro-environment, pro-Bill of Rights Republican, and I will be voting against [Judge Alito's] nomination.*

Lincoln Chafee. (2006, January 30). "Sen. Chafee Comments on Nomination of Judge Alito." *US Fed News*.

**2003** — **Representative Jim Greenwood (R-PA)** recognized the federal abortion ban passed by Congress and signed by President George W. Bush as a political tactic and was one of the few representatives to call for a health exception:

*The so-called "partial-birth" abortion bill has always been nothing but a political exercise. It was certainly a political exercise last week for a number of reasons.*

Sarah Larson. (June 12, 2003). *The Intelligencer*, Doylestown, PA, p. 3B.

**2000 — First Lady Barbara Bush** was clear in her opinion that her party should not embrace anti-choice ideology:

*I believe in state's rights, and I don't think [anti-abortion ideology] should be a national platform.*

On the inclusion of abortion within the GOP platform in Kranish, Michael. (2000, June 9). "Campaign 2000; GOP Muffles Discussion on Abortion." *The Boston Globe*, p. A1.

**1999 — Senator John McCain (R-AZ)** was clear in his support of *Roe v. Wade* when he was a candidate for U.S. president in 1999:

*I'd love to see a point where [Roe v. Wade] is irrelevant and could be repealed because abortion is no longer necessary. But certainly in the short term, or even the long term, I would not support repeal of Roe v. Wade, which would then force X number of women in American to [undergo] illegal and dangerous operations.*

Carla Marinucci, (1999, August 20). "McCain Gets Boost From Bush's Troubles: Senator Greeted Warmly at Commonwealth Club." *San Francisco Chronicle*, p. A3.

**1998 — Pro-choice Representative Deborah Pryce (R-OH)** clearly disapproved of including anti-choice language her party's plank for the presidential campaign:

*As Republicans, we're doing ourselves a disservice by continuing to shine a light on an issue that is so divisive for our own party.*

Jonathan Riskind, (1998, January 18). "Anti-Abortion Advocates Make Inroads." *Columbus Dispatch*, Columbus, Ohio.

**1997 — Pro-choice Representative Nancy Johnson (R-CT)** was also critical of the GOP's anti-choice position:

*The unsaid implications of the anti-choice position is that you can't trust women with moral authority. That is deeply resented by women who need to be trusted with moral authority, economic sensibility, and a political say.*

A.B. Stoddard. (1997, March 5). *The Hill*. Washington, D.C.

**1996 — Senator Mark Hatfield (R-OR)** could not be called pro-choice, but he knew that abortion bans were not the way to reduce the need for abortion

*There are ways to reduce abortion and the demand for abortion, and that is contraception. 'Family planning' is perhaps a more subtle way to express it.*

"Roll Call." (1996, March 17). *The Stuart News / Port St. Lucie News*, p. C8.

**1996 — New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman** was proud to call herself pro-choice. She believed there is room in Republican Party for leaders who are pro-choice:

*The abortion issue is one on which the Republican Party send a very strong and clear message: This is an issue on which good and caring people can disagree.*

Mark Obmascik, (1996, October 13). "Whitman downplays weight of opinion polls." *The Denver Post*, Denver, Colorado.

**1994 — Senator Barry Goldwater (R-AZ)**, a staunch conservative, was an outspoken supporter of abortion access and made his views clear in a 1994 interview:

*A lot of so-called conservatives don't know what the word means. They think I've turned liberal because I believe a woman has a right to an abortion. That's a decision that's up to the pregnant woman, not up to the pope or some do-gooders or the Religious Right.*

In Rentschler, William H. (1994, October 23). "AUH20 in '94; Barry Goldwater's Still in His Element as the Straight-Shooter from the West." *Chicago Tribune*.

**1994 — Governor Mitt Romney (R-MA)** has also held strong pro-choice views during his political career:

*I believe that abortion should be safe and legal in this country.*

Excerpt from 1994 Massachusetts' Senatorial Debate in "The 1994 Campaign: Excerpt from Debate by Kennedy and Romney." (1994, October 26). *The New York Times*, p. A24.

*Many years ago, I had a dear, close family relative that was very close to me who passed away from an illegal abortion. It is since that time [that] my mother and family have been committed to the belief that we can believe as we want, but we will not force our beliefs on others on that matter. And you will not see me wavering on that.*

Excerpt from 1994 Massachusetts' Senatorial Debate in Kornacki, Steve. (2006, December 11). "The Two Faces of Mitt Romney." *New York Observer*.

**1986 — Republican U.S. Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun**, who was appointed by President Richard Nixon and who wrote the majority decision in *Roe v. Wade*, was also very clear about a woman's right to choose when he wrote for the majority in *Thornburgh v. American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists*,

*The States are not free, under the guise of protecting maternal health or potential life, to intimidate women into continuing pregnancies.*  
*Thornburgh v. American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists, 476 U.S. 747*

## ON FAMILY PLANNING

**2008** — Representative Christopher Shays (R-CT), with four other pro-family planning Republicans, signed a congressional letter to the Department of Health and Human Services opposing new regulations that would have jeopardized women's access to critically needed healthcare, including contraception.

*We respect federal laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of moral or religious opposition to abortion, many of which have been settled law for many years. However, this proposed rulemaking has far-reaching implications that threaten existing protections for women's access to health care, information and voluntary family services.*

Excerpt from Republican House letter opposing HHS Rule (September 24, 2008)

**2007** — Representative Christopher Shays (R-CT) was an outspoken advocate for lifting the global gag rule on international family planning organizations overseas and was especially troubled by the implications of indirectly infringing on the free-speech rights of family planning groups around the world:

*Congress would never consider applying regulations upon domestic health organizations that restrict the way they spend their own funds. If they did, they would be unconstitutional. If we are serious about promoting democracy abroad, we cannot abandon these principles in our dealings with foreign nations.*

<http://www.vote.com/vote/6872552/argument6872712.phtml>  
 accessed September 12, 2007

**1973** — One of the strongest advocates of family planning was **President George H. W. Bush** when he was a U.S. representative:

:

*As we amended and updated the Social Security Act in 1967, I was impressed by the sensible approach of Alan Guttmacher the obstetrician who served as President of Planned Parenthood. It was ridiculous he told the Committee to blame mothers on welfare for having too many children when the clinics and hospitals they used were absolutely prohibited from saying a word about birth control. So we*

*took the lead in Congress in providing money and urging — in fact, even requiring — that in the United States family planning services be available for every woman, not just the private patient with her own gynecologist.*

George Herbert Walker Bush. (1973). "Foreward." In Phyllis Tilson Piotrow, *World Population Crisis — The United States Response*. New York: Praeger Publishers

**1969** — As a U.S. representative, Republican **President George H. W. Bush** clearly saw the danger in anti-family planning zealotry:

*We need to take sensationalism out of this topic so that it can no longer be used by militants who have no real knowledge of the voluntary nature of the program but, rather are using it as a political steppingstone. If family planning is anything, it is a public health matter.*

*The Congressional Record* — February 24, 1969

**1969** — **President Richard M. Nixon** argued for the establishment of Title X, America's family planning program:

*It is my view that no American woman should be denied access to family planning assistance because of her economic condition. I believe, therefore, that we should establish as a national goal the provision of adequate family planning services within the next five years to all those who want them but cannot afford them. This we have the capacity to do.*

Richard M. Nixon. *Special Message to the Congress* (July 18 1969).

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=2132>  
 accessed May 29, 2009.

**1969** — **President Dwight D. Eisenhower** saw reproductive rights for what they are — basic human rights:

*Millions of parents in our country — hundreds of millions abroad — are still denied the clear human right of choosing the number of children they will have. Government must act, and private citizens must cooperate urgently through voluntary means to secure this right for all peoples. Failure would limit the expectations of future generations to abject poverty and suffering, and bring down upon us history's condemnation.*

Message delivered to Planned Parenthood in 1968 in "Wise to Support Family Planning." (1997, August 5). *The Seattle Post – Intelligencer*.

## ON PRIVACY

**1986 — U.S. Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun**, who was appointed by President Richard Nixon, was very clear about constitutional guarantees of the right to privacy in his 1986 dissent in *Bowers v. Hardwick*:

*The right of an individual to conduct intimate relationships in the intimacy of his or her own home seems to me to be the heart of the Constitution's protection of privacy.*  
*Bowers v. Hardwick*, 478 U.S. 186.

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