

Why should libertarians embrace the Consistent Life Ethic?

The prescribed role of government is to protect the rights of every individual, including the right to life, liberty and property.

- Libertarian Party platform

The Consistent Life Ethic is an ideology that opposes any and all aggressive violence against human beings. As libertarians, we already embrace a similar approach to nonviolence with the Non-Aggression Principle. By our own logic, it is unethical to harm another human being, which is why we stand against violence such as the death penalty, torture, and unjust war. We want to protect the rights of every individual – but are we leaving anyone out?

There are two classes of human beings whose rights are currently unprotected by the Libertarian Party platform: the preborn affected by abortion and the elderly and disabled affected by assisted suicide. We recognize that these issues are highly contentious, but they are both forms of aggressive violence. This is why we must delve more deeply into the ethics surrounding them before dismissing either one as merely an issue of bodily rights.

for more info :
www.lifemattersjournal.org/libertarian

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But wait...

Why should preborn human beings be considered individuals under the law?

At the moment of fertilization of two human gametes, an entirely new human being with unique DNA is created.¹ There is no inherent distinction between “individual” and “human being,” so it follows that every human being deserves to be treated as an individual under the law. Differences in level of development, location, or dependency are arbitrary and inconsistent distinctions to make when deciding to limit the right to life of unique individuals.

Wouldn't restricting abortion access be a violation of the mother's self ownership?

Although the ability to exercise sole dominion and make choices in general is a right, violent choices (like murder and rape) forcibly interfere with the equal right of others to live in whatever manner they choose. Elective abortion is another violent choice which forcibly ends the life of the individual in the womb, and so limiting the ability to make this violent choice is not a true interference on self ownership.

Why should the government get involved?

If the prescribed role of government is to protect the rights of every individual, then that should include protecting the rights of preborn individuals as well. Abortion currently violates the rights of roughly 3,000 individuals every day in the United States.²

What about assisted suicide?

In principle, it makes sense that there is a right to die – and even a right to ask someone to help you. However, there is a difference between principle and practice. In practice, it is often difficult to determine whether an individual has fully consented or has been coerced. This can be seen in places like Oregon, where “pain” isn't even listed as one of the top five primary reasons that assisted suicide is pursued. Instead, “loss of autonomy,” “less able to engage in activities,” and other issues of disability were listed as the top reasons.³ It is clear that assisted suicide is the product of a society which devalues the lives of people with disabilities.

WORKS CITED

- ¹Moore, Keith L., T. V. N. Persaud, and Mark G. Torchia. *The Developing Human: Clinically-Oriented Embryology*. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier, 2016. Print.
- ²Induced Abortion in the United States.” Guttmacher Institute. <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-united-states?gclid=CKbpi8LR880CFdRZhgodyp4lmQ>
- ³Oregon's Death with Dignity Act, 2013. <http://public.health.oregon.gov/ProviderPartnerResources/EvaluationResearch/DeathwithDignityAct/Documents/year16.pdf>

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