

Honest Questions for Gov. Cuomo About Abortion

According to a Feb. 6, 2019, op ed in *The New York Times* by New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, “The president and the religious right are spreading falsehoods about abortion laws to inflame their base.”

My questions to Gov. Cuomo are simple. First, are the president and religious right really spreading falsehoods about abortion laws? Second, how does Gov. Cuomo determine what is right and wrong when it comes to abortion?

Gov. Cuomo speaks of “the far-right’s escalation of its assault on a woman’s constitutional rights.” And he claims that President Trump, who was once “very pro-choice,” now “shamelessly courts the religious right to win votes.”

He explains that, “I just signed the Reproductive Health Act into law to protect against the Republicans’ efforts to pack the Supreme Court with extreme conservatives to overturn the constitutional protections recognized in *Roe v. Wade*.”

And he notes that *Roe* has been “repeatedly reaffirmed by the Supreme Court, in multiple decisions.”

But, he claims, the law only applies to abortions before the baby is viable.

Regrettably, “As part of their attack on women’s rights, Mr. Trump and his allies are intentionally spreading lies about New York’s Reproductive Health Act.”

What, then, does this act allow?

“The Reproductive Health Act,” Gov. Cuomo writes, “guarantees a woman’s right to abortion in the first 24 weeks of a pregnancy or when the fetus is not viable, and permits it

afterward only when a woman's life or health is threatened or at risk. Contrary to what its detractors claim, the Reproductive Health Act does not allow abortions minutes before birth, nor does it allow third-trimester abortions 'for any reason.' Third-trimester procedures are extremely rare, making up only about 1 percent of all abortions. The option is available for exactly the reason stated in Roe and successor cases: to protect the life or health of the woman."

Ironically, despite Gov. Cuomo's derogatory assault on tens of millions of Americans—our positions are repeatedly described as "extreme"—what he succeeds in doing in his op-ed is confirm exactly what we have been saying. Under this new law, abortions can be performed until the last minute of pregnancy "to protect the life or health of the woman."

That is precisely our point, and that is why there has been such national outrage.

Gov. Cuomo claims to support "pluralism," yet in the name of pluralism, he insults all people of conscience who differ with him (and, for the record, agree with the historic views of the governor's church, the Catholic Church).

He speaks of the president's "diatribe" in his State of the Union and of the "far right's escalation of its assault on a woman's constitutional rights." He writes of efforts to pack the Supreme Court with "extreme conservatives" and describes Justices Gorsuch and Kavanaugh as "two extreme-right justices."

He claims that, "Mr. Trump and his allies are intentionally spreading lies" and that, "Mr. Trump and the religious right are spreading falsehoods about New York's law to inflame their base. Activists on the far right continue to mislead with the ridiculous claim that the act will allow abortions up to a minute before birth."

But, to repeat, this is what the law allows, with the totally

ambiguous reference to “the health of the woman.”

As explained in a Catholic report on the New York law released on Jan. 30, “In effect, it means any reason whatsoever, if the woman and the abortionist consider it relevant to her emotional or psychological or family health.”

Why can’t Gov. Cuomo admit to what the legislation allows? And, since he is a zealous proponent of a woman’s alleged Constitutional right to abortion, why not defend it in full? Why defend the “right” to slice up or burn up a 26-week-old fetus (therefore, at the end of the second trimester) but wrong to do so at 27 (or 34) weeks (during the third trimester)?

And if fetal viability outside the womb is the big issue, why allow a last-minute abortion when the baby could just as well be delivered (and given up for adoption)?

He writes, “I do not believe that religious values should drive political positions,” although he notes that both the president and “the Catholic Church are opposed to state actions like the Reproductive Health Act.”

But would his presumed religious opposition to something like infanticide not drive his political position? Do none of his religious values drive his political positions? Are they that easily separated?

For Gov. Cuomo, however, a major issue is this. Our “objections aren’t about the rare occasion when a woman has an abortion to protect her health or life. This is about the desire of Mr. Trump and allies on the right to outlaw abortion entirely. It is about bringing America back to the pre-Roe days.”

Actually, while we moral conservatives do not believe in a woman’s “right” to abort the baby in her womb, the reason for our fervent response to the New York law is its extreme

provisions.

We have been campaigning to overturn Roe v. Wade for decades. That is nothing new.

We are responding to the New York bill specifically because of the new bloodshed it will bring, with all respect to the governor's denials.

And that, again, brings us back to the crux of the matter.

Gov. Cuomo, we are not spreading lies about the wrongly-named "Reproductive Health Act." Our statements are accurate and true.

What is inflammatory is not our claims but rather the law itself.

And since, sir, you signed the bill into law, with pride and gusto at that, that means you affirm a woman's right to abort her baby one minute before delivery if it is deemed in the interest of her health (which would include her mental or emotional health).

By what morality, religious or other, can you possibly defend such an action? And by what morality, religious or other, did you not insist that babies that are viable outside of the womb should be delivered rather than aborted?

These, sir, are questions you need to consider before God, the one who formed these babies in the womb—for life, not for death.

Your real battle, then, is not with the president or the religious right or even the church. Your battle is with the Lord.