

EP2: SO MANY ABORTION BANS IN AMERICA

Helen 0:06

Hello, everyone, and welcome back to another episode of and that's on equity.

Azumi 0:11

Today we're discussing a pretty heavy topic, we're going to be discussing abortion rights in light of recent abortion ban laws.

Helen 0:19

So the first thing that we're going to be discussing today is abortion laws in America.

Azumi 0:24

So between 1910 and 1973, abortion was a criminal procedure in America. It was illegal to get an abortion and only in cases to save the mother's life were you allowed to undergo that procedure. And during the years in which an abortion was illegal in the US, thousands of women were dying every year due to unsafe abortions. So we all know at this point that abortion bans don't stop abortion stages stop safe abortion.

Helen 0:56

Yes.

Azumi 0:57

So even though abortions had become considered safe during that time, like we had the medical technology to perform safe abortion, there were still 1000s of deaths, because it was illegal. And because it was banned, and because people were getting abortions, not safely.

Helen 1:18

Yeah, like under the radar, like kind of like black market of abortions.

Azumi 1:25

So because of this, there is lots of legal political and religious advocacy for women's reproductive health and rights. So yeah, everyone was advocating for abortion to be legalized. So that exists for health and safety of women. And in 1973, the Supreme Court finally legalized abortion in America, this Supreme Court ruling titled Roe v. Wade, declared that all women have the right to terminate a pregnancy until the fetus is viable outside the womb. So that's usually at about six months.

Helen 2:08

Six months being pregnant.

Azumi 2:10

Yes.

Helen 2:10

Okay.

Azumi 2:11

So that was a huge step forward in women's health and reproductive rights. And gave women the option to have a safe abortion a safe procedure of their choosing.

Helen 2:26

But now, in 2021 50 years after this huge step for pregnancy related reproductive health and rights, we are now headed towards overturning Roe v. Wade, and criminalizing abortion yet again.

Azumi 2:44

So, there has been a huge abortion ban trend in 2021. Since January, there have been 561 abortion restrictions, including 165 abortion bans just in 2021.

Helen 3:02

Right. And again, this is still in the the US.

Azumi 3:05

Yeah.

Helen 3:06

That's a lot of numbers, Azumi.

Azumi 3:07

Yeah. That's a lot of abortions, man. And we haven't seen numbers like that since 2011. And before that, since way back when. And so, specifically, the ban that made big news was the Texas ban. Recently, this year, Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed into law, the Heartbeat Ban, banning abortions where fetal heartbeat is detected. So that happens at around six weeks pregnancy, which is before most women even know that they're pregnant.

Helen 3:44

Yeah.

Azumi 3:45

So you have, yeah, so you have to have an abortion before you even know you're pregnant, which obviously is very difficult to do. Abortion providers are now required to check for fetal heartbeat before performing an abortion and are banned from doing so if a heartbeat is detected.

Helen 4:04

Right. Well is this put into place currently? Like, is this the law now or is it still being passed?

Azumi 4:10

In Texas? This bill comes into effect in September.

Helen 4:15

Okay.

Azumi 4:15

This bill allows anyone including non Texas residents, to use lawsuits to harass people who have helped people access abortion care, after six weeks pregnancy. So this means that if somebody sees a doctor giving an abortion or somebody escorting someone to an abortion, or somebody driving even a taxi to bring someone to an abortion, they can get fined or they can get in trouble for helping someone get an abortion.

Helen 4:54

Really?

Azumi 4:55

Yeah.

Helen 4:56

Do we know how much the fine is?

Azumi 4:59

No. So I don't know if there's like a set fine, but like you can take it to court like it would be a lawsuit.

Helen 5:06

Oh, dear. That's ridiculous.

Azumi 5:09

Yeah. So this would definitely prevent doctors from giving abortions because they don't want a lawsuit.

Helen 5:19

Yeah. And but of course, are they still allowing abortions in Texas for like medical emergency reasons like if it's gonna like harm the pregnant person's life?

Azumi 5:34

Yeah, so the only exception to this law is in the case of medical emergency. Abortions are banned, even in the cases of rape or incest. And the bill states that public and private agencies provide emergency contraception for rape and incest basically suggesting that if you got raped or incest was involved, it was your responsibility to take Plan B. And if you got pregnant, that's on you and we can't give you an abortion.

Helen 6:07

That's incredibly frustrating.

Azumi 6:11

Yeah, even even Donald Trump says he is okay with abortion if rape or incest is involved. Even Donald Trump, but not Texas Governor Greg Abbott. So yeah, Greg Abbott says that he's signing the bill to "ensure that the life of every unborn child who has a heartbeat will be saved from the ravages of abortion". And I don't know why he's working so hard to save fetuses. Like there are so many children in America, so many children around the world who are suffering who need help. So if he wants to, if he wants to save children, there are billions of children he can save.

Helen 7:02

Right. And then I'm also seeing here that Arkansas, Oklahoma and Montana have all passed similar abortion ban bills, and they're going to come into effect later this year. So the, again, the Texas one's coming into full effect in September. These ones are like August, November, October.

Azumi 7:20

Yeah.

Helen 7:21

Right for Arkansas, Oklahoma and Montana. Wow.

Azumi 7:26

There are also a number of other states who have had abortion bill signed by governors, but they're not yet being taken into effect due to legal challenges.

Helen 7:35

As they should. So that's Louisiana, Missouri and South Carolina.

Azumi 7:41

Yeah. So mostly southern states.

Helen 7:44

Yeah. Midwest, southern states. Yeah.

Azumi 7:46

Which we would expect, but still very upsetting in 2021. So we were talking earlier about how federal law it is still legal, right to have an abortion.

Helen 8:00

Roe v. Wade?

Azumi 8:01

Yes. But we get in further, where now the Supreme Court is currently reviewing whether all state laws that ban pre viability abortions are unconstitutional.

Helen 8:16

So what does that mean pre viability abortions?

Azumi 8:20

So if you remember the Roe v. Wade, states that abortions are legal until the fetus is viable, which is about six months, so pre viable would be before that.

Helen 8:32

Okay.

Azumi 8:33

So, basically, right now, the Supreme Court is deciding whether or not Roe v Wade moves forward, if they make changes to it. If they throw it out altogether? We'll just have to wait and see. And hopefully, they keep it around because it's good.

Helen 8:57

It's a good ruling.

Azumi 8:59

Yeah. So if Roe v Wade is overturned, or even just limited, stricter abortion regulations can be put in place in America. And with the conservative majority on the Supreme Court, it's actually likely to happen.

Helen 9:15

Because there's more conservative people on the Supreme Court that make that decision?

Azumi 9:20

Yeah. And with the majority conservative Supreme Court, it seems as though they're using this opportunity to change federal law. So the Supreme Court ruling is expected next year so we're gonna find out next year what's going on with all this.

Helen 9:36

Okay, so the Roe v. Wade might be amended, right?

Azumi 9:40

Yeah.

Helen 9:45

So azumi Why do women in the US have abortions?

Azumi 9:51

So based on the turn away study, 40% of women sought abortion due to financial reasons, 36% due to timing, 31% due to partner related reasons, and 29%, due to the need to focus on other children. So this all makes sense. These are reasons that I would guess women or people would choose to abort. But if the Texas Governor or the Supreme Court really want to decrease the number of abortions, there are ways to do that, while also helping and supporting women. Even though there's of course, nothing wrong with choosing abortion, and everyone who wants an abortion should be given the opportunity to aboard. It's also important to recognize that abortion is not really a woman's first choice. Abortion can be a great solution to fix an existing problem. But the decision to a board only comes up once a pregnant person is already in a difficult situation.

Helen 11:00

Yeah.

Azumi 11:00

So by looking at the reasons why women choose abortions, we can find ways to prevent pregnant people from ending up in these tough situations in the first place. And while doing so, also, I guess, decrease the number of abortions like some US governors say they want. So to Texas Governor Greg Abbott, you could provide financial support for expecting mothers. 40% of people abort for financial reasons. Maybe you could help them out. Yeah, maybe they wouldn't abort

Azumi 11:37

You could provide affordable or free contraceptives or birth control to women who do not wish to get pregnant, that would take out more abortioins.

Helen 11:49

Right. And that has to do with like, I've heard, like over the years that in school and stuff, sex education is vastly different across the country in the US, because of like, the culture around these topics, don't discuss scientific fact. And it's more like they teach abstinence only and they don't talk about how to have safe sex. So then, obviously, like people would be curious. This is what they say, people will be curious, and then they get pregnant. And then, you know, that's just a lot of unwanted pregnancies that could occur.

Azumi 12:39

Yeah, definitely educating people, like you're saying could limit the number of pregnant and unwanted pregnancies, therefore, abortions. Yeah, we could also provide support to women who are facing challenges in their homes or in their relationships, because I think many women don't want to have children due to their situation at home or their situation with their partner. So if you're trying to eliminate abortion, there are actual ways that you could help women.

Helen 13:16

The root causes.

Azumi 13:17

Yeah, the root causes, and, and if Governor's actually cared about women and women's health, they would be looking at these options, rather than just banning altogether. Choosing abortion is such a difficult choice to make. And a decision that I'm sure has been thoroughly thought out by everyone who decides to go through with it. And everyone is going to make the decision that's best for them and best for their fetus and best for their situation in their lives. And that's nobody else's decision to make.

Helen 13:57

Yeah.

Azumi 13:58

And especially in the US, in like one of the richest countries in the world. Where abortion can be done super safely, super effectively. It doesn't make sense to stop offering that.

Helen 14:12

Yeah, because I've heard in like, in developing countries and stuff a lot of women because they don't have proper access to birth control or just contraceptives in general, if they want to have an abortion performed, there's a lot of deaths surrounding that. I heard, like stories where they would use like coat hangers like wire coat hangers to perform abortions illegally.

Azumi 14:46

Yeah, that doesn't sound good. I've also heard like, they use like broken coke bottles. Yeah, if you don't have the resources and that's your only option. That's what happened.

Helen 14:59

And that just puts the people who are getting the abortions done at such high risk of dying, and infection and anything like that.

Azumi 15:07

Yeah. And, again, if America wants to decrease the number of abortions, maybe we could be providing birth control or contraceptives to developing countries, so that women have a choice on whether they want to go through with a pregnancy.

Azumi 15:30

So, I just wanted to talk about some anti-abortion arguments that people make and just discuss, okay, some of them maybe seem reasonable, some of them not so much, but we'll discuss. So one argument is that abortion leads to depression and suicide. So this is an argument that's actually pretty common for anti abortionists. And they have created the term Post Abortion Syndrome or PAS. The people who created this are not doctors. They just wanted to come up with the reason to be anti abortion.

Helen 16:18

It makes them sound like they know what they're talking about. Like it sounds real. Yeah. Post abortion syndrome.

Azumi 16:24

Yeah. But years of research have proven that this "syndrome" does not exist. And there is no found link between abortion and depression. And yeah, in reality, most women report relief as their primary feeling after abortion, not depression. Yeah. So that one is debunked.

Azumi 16:50

Another anti abortion argument is that abortion causes cancer.

Helen 16:55

Really?

Azumi 16:56

Yeah, anti abortionists have been saying for years that abortion causes breast cancer. Again, this claim has been rejected by scientific literature and the medical community.

Helen 17:09

So, debunked.

Azumi 17:12

Another argument is that abortion reduces fertility. And this one has some truth to it, because past abortion methods could cause some scarring in some people. That would reduce fertility. But with today's methods, there's no effect on future fertility.

Helen 17:35

As long as it's like being performed, like clinically and as safe as possible.

Azumi 17:41

Yeah. Another anti abortion argument is that the fetus can feel pain. But actually the neuro anatomical apparatus that's required for pain and sensation is not developed in the fetus until about 26 weeks. And most abortions happened before this. Most of them happened before nine weeks.

Unknown Speaker 18:05

Okay, so,

Helen 18:07

So, debunked.

Helen 18:08

Yeah, and the last anti abortion argument is that reducing access to abortion, decreases the demand for abortion. And this we've discussed earlier is not true. Reducing access to abortion, not decrease the number of abortions, it just makes abortions unsafe and potentially fatal.

Helen 18:33

Yeah.

Azumi 18:38

So the biggest reason why many people are against abortion is for religious reasons. So I was wondering Helen being religious yourself, how do you navigate the topic of abortion in relation to your church and everything else? Maybe your family? I'm not sure.

Helen 18:55

Well, that is a tough question, Azumi, because well, first of all, I want to make it clear if it wasn't obvious throughout the episode, that I agree with pro choice that is what I morally believe is correct. Allowing everyone to be autonomous over their bodies and make decisions for themselves. However, being a Greek Orthodox Christian girl, Eastern Orthodoxy is like the original like Christianity, one of the originals right.

Azumi 19:32

Very traditional.

Helen 19:33

Very traditional like the traditions and beliefs have barely changed over the hundreds of years that have passed since the religion was started, right. So of course, being immersed in a very traditional religion, it's difficult because I'm a young woman living in Vancouver, grew up in Vancouver, very progressive city and I immerse myself in media that is, "progressive". So I can't speak for other people my age, but I feel like people who are my age growing up in Vancouver, other similar cities who are also Eastern Orthodox may find this a challenge as well, where it's kind of a constant battle of like, what really is right? What really and what is wrong? And am I being a "picking and choosing Christian" where I only pick out some things that I like about the religion and then I say no to the others, and I only choose what serves me? You know what I mean?

Helen 20:51

So it's, I can't really give like a certain answer to this question, except the fact that I have my own beliefs. And I'm not just blindly following the religion.

Azumi 21:03

Yeah.

Helen 21:04

Yes, I educate myself about what the values, beliefs, traditions are of my religion, and I'm aware of them. But there comes a point where I am my own person, and I need to do what I think is

right. Whether like, for whatever topic we're talking about, in this case, abortion, again, pro choice, because that's just what I just think everyone is allowed to have their own freewill and do what they want.

Azumi 21:31

Yeah, I think that's really important. Like what you're saying, to not blindly follow into, make your own moral judgments? Like, for political parties, for religion, for anything, yeah, you have to think about things for yourself.

Helen 21:51

And, also, like, if I was put in this position, of like, if I was presented with the option of getting an abortion, I going back to pro choice and how everyone can do what they want. I literally don't know what I would do. And if I was put in this position, I would need to evaluate the situation that I was in all the factors that we were discussing, and then that would help me make a decision. But I, I, as of this moment, do not know what I would do, because I don't know what the situation would be.

Azumi 22:24

Yeah, for. For me, I don't have any religious factors that are pushing me to not go through with an abortion. But that still is a moral question for anybody. And it is a big choice that will affect anybody's life immensely. So it is a difficult choice for anybody to make even when religion isn't involved. And for me, I do think that I would go through with an abortion if I were to get pregnant now. And yeah, I'm so grateful that that is an option for me in Canada. And yeah, Helen, you know, that, like, I thought that I was pregnant. And that felt really real to me. And yeah, so it is comforting knowing that I do live in Canada. And now going through that experience, I really feel for the people who are in Texas, or the other states where abortion is being banned, or even if it isn't banned, and your family is super against it for any reason, religion or whatever. And you're not able to because of your family either. Yeah, I really do feel for those people.

Helen 23:42

Me too.

Helen 23:46

So yeah, anyways, and that leads us into our end segment, "and that's on you". So each episode, we ask you the viewers a question in which in the next episode, we will read out your replies. However, y'all have not submitted any answers from the previous episode. So we're just gonna move on to the question from this episode.

Azumi 24:13

Yeah. So our question for this episode is how do you navigate cultural beliefs on topics such as abortion? So we've heard a bit about what Helen thinks on the topic and we would love to hear your responses.

Helen 24:27

Yeah. So let us know through DMS either on Instagram or Facebook, or send us an email or if you would like to stay anonymous, you can find a link to a Google form on our website in which you can answer this question.

Azumi 24:41

Thanks for listening to this episode of.... And That's On Equity.

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