

# THE BYSTANDER —★—

## the Age of Uterine Law

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The Catholic Church has Canon Law, Muslims have Sharia Law, some Jewish communities have Hasidic Law, and even the prison system has a “Penal Code.” And now Republicans have established *Uterine Law*; the legislative right to determine what decisions women can make about their own reproductive systems. Actually, we are re-entering the age of Uterine Law: it’s only in the past 50 years that women have (legally) had the choice to use birth control, terminate pregnancies, or charge their own spouses with rape.

Since I’m 65 now, I no longer need to be concerned with reproducing, but I still find it infuriatingly humiliating and degrading that my uterus, ovaries and vagina (all perfectly normal body parts that can be printed in this family newspaper) are NOT the private parts I thought they were. Instead, they continue to be the primary focus of discussion in Congress, State Capitals, and the Ovarian (oops) Oval Office.

When I watch TV, I am forced to mute commercials encouraging men to buy medications that will prolong their ability to use an organ that (when used according to the manual) can create the need for women to want reproductive choices in the first place. But I never hear insinuations that men should entertain ANY legal limits in the use of their reproductive organs. Somehow, only women need to have their gonads directed by fiat.

What I’d prefer would be to strengthen laws that govern the proper and lawful use of the testes, particularly when it is in the sperm-delivery mode (I’m not being obscene: this is just basic biology). I’d love to see rigid enforcement of paternity laws and child support payments by fathers who sire children and leave them unsupported (that’s the male equivalent of abortion: spawn them but terminate responsibility at birth). If that requires state-sponsored DNA tests to track down the father, bring it on! I’d like to see wages garnished if

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child-care responsibilities and visitations are missed. I'd love to see the reaction to outlawing male masturbation (again), since it is specifically mentioned in the Bible as a sin. And if you are citing your Christian objection to abortion, I hope you also abolish porn, infidelity (again), war, and the Death Penalty (again).

I'd really appreciate it if legislating the uterus wasn't signed by a man who has bragged, in public, that his own penis has had free will to roam for the past 50 years, regardless of the state of matrimony he lived in at the time. If we must return to Uterine Law, please don't enact it by a man whose actions and words have been disrespectful to me personally, as a veteran who has experienced military sexual assault. If we must have restrictions on reproductive rights, please accompany it with a corresponding "Penile Code" that is equally restrictive for men.

And lastly, please stop calling it a "Party." It's not a "party" when you first get rid of health insurance for millions of women, then de-fund one of the only sources of free prenatal care an uninsured pregnant woman has access to (Planned Parenthood), and then make the option to abort expensive, hard to get, or illegal.

I'll admit, there is one aspect of your "Party" that makes it look like you're having fun, and that is the joy on your faces when you introduce bills to restrict our choices: it illustrates your lust to control women, not just in the home, at the workplace, or in bed, but also inside our own bodies.