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Beyond The Abortion Wars: A Way Forward For A New Generation



CHARLES C. CAMOSY

BEYOND THE ABORTION WARS

a way forward for a new generation

foreword by MELINDA HENNERBERGER



Synopsis

Cuts through the mass confusion surrounding abortion and lays out solid common ground The abortion debate in the United States is confused. Ratings-driven media coverage highlights extreme views and creates the illusion that we are stuck in a hopeless stalemate. In this book Charles Camosy argues that our polarized public discourse hides the fact that most Americans actually agree on the major issues at stake in abortion morality and law. Unpacking the complexity of the abortion issue, Camosy shows that placing oneself on either side of the typical polarizations -- pro-life vs. pro-choice, liberal vs. conservative, Democrat vs. Republican -- only serves to further confuse the debate and limits our ability to have fruitful dialogue. Camosy then proposes a new public policy that he believes is consistent with the beliefs of the broad majority of Americans and supported by the best ideas and arguments about abortion from both secular and religious sources.

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Customer Reviews

I read this book to discuss with a friend, against a deadline, and the first 30 pages went slowly. The

topic is so discouraging and the prospect of learning anything seemed so low. At that point, I figured out how many pages per day I would have to read to be finished by the time I met my friend, and put the book down. But when I picked it up again and got to the sections on the moral status of the fetus and the options for public policy, I found the author's points compelling and his statistics and case studies fascinating. I don't agree with all of his conclusions, but I feel I could comfortably discuss them with people who had very different options from mine and still find common ground. I do wish the author had given more space to psychological problems that can not only prevent women from consenting to sex but also delay recognition of pregnancy and even make a pregnancy dangerous for a woman and any children she already has. I think he dismisses psychological issues too easily. His constant disparagement of corporations is also a little too easy. Most women find more support for a pregnancy in the policies of American corporations than in the policies of the American government. In fact, the importance of subsidized universal day care could have been mentioned more prominently, more often, and in more detail. Nevertheless, this is a valuable book and makes for absorbing reading. It is important for the author's painstaking research, excellent presentation, and open approach to the problem in a way that encourages further thought and further discussion.

Groundbreaking. Camosy may perhaps be the first to address the abortion debate head on, including multiple agendas that fuel the divide. He writes with insight and clarity, and draws from multiple perspectives while citing statistics. He does not write for the convinced/opinionated reader, nor does he write with religious fervor beyond logic. I feel hopeful for those who read this book. I've been in search for moderation within the abortion debate, and this may be it.

On time; as described; satisfied!

Really great analysis of the current abortion rights issue. Very thoughtful and well written.

Perfect

I couldn't put this book down.

Professor Camosy's book is an important and incredibly timely new contribution to the abortion debates in the US. In light of the popularity of culture warfare framings of

the relative stances on the abortion issue, perhaps one of the most refreshing features of this book is Camosy's hopeful analysis of the state of a public debate that many presume to have arrived at a stalemate. Examining the actual contours of public opinion, Camosy reveals the mismatch between the polarized representations of the state of opinion and the reality on the ground. Rather than abandoning persuasion and consensus-building for absolute political and social antagonism, Camosy recalls us to irenic and optimistic discourse between parties whose convictions may not be as irreconcilable as it first appears. My girlfriend is doing her doctoral research on the development of evangelical responses to abortion in the 1970 and 1980s. One of the themes that we have frequently discussed is the radical historical contingency and flexibility of party lines that many presume to be absolute and unalterable. Camosy exhibits a clear awareness of this fact and the underappreciated possibilities that it presents to participants in current debates who are prepared to forge charitable conversations with people of differing positions. Camosy's careful treatment of subjects such as abortion in the case of rape challenged me to re-evaluate my position on the matter. I am sure that my experience will be shared by readers of many persuasions, who may find that this book presents them with ways in which to give appropriate weight to positions they might formerly have dismissed as inimical to their central concerns, without having to surrender their concerns or principles in order to do so. One of the most notable strengths of this book is its presentation of abortion with a wide-angle, rather than a zoom lens. Widening the lens unsettles and challenges the certainties of people on all sides of these debates. Pro-life readers may begin to see more clearly just how essential a broader social concern and provision for the needs and dignity of women and children is to any adequate response to abortion. Pro-choice readers may be brought to question just how much of a "choice" abortion represents for the many women who lack such concern and provision. An effective response to abortion must involve a constructive commitment to a more just society, a society that affords dignity and value to all of its members and does not pit the interests of vulnerable parties against each other. Much of Camosy's book is devoted to discussion of practical policy proposals, designed to protect and advance the wellbeing of both women and pre-natal infants. The combination of principled reflection with an engaged and pragmatic approach is one of the outstanding features of this book. The discussion of the good (the discussion of values—the "is") and the right (what is to be done—the "ought") in US society's abortion debate and policy is seldom so ably handled as it is here.

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