

*The following editorial, by program co-chair [Steven E. Calvin, MD](#), is reprinted from the Opinion page of the Minneapolis Star Tribune. It originally appeared on Monday, April 19th.*

## **Commentary: Paper's predictably prochoice; public isn't so sure**

As a physician who testified for one of the three abortion-related measures supported by the Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life this legislative session I found the [Star Tribune] April 15 editorial maddeningly predictable. Advocates of abortion and the editorial page staff of this paper are outraged by the persistence of those who think that an unrestricted right to lethal violence should have some limits. They fail to recognize that abortion reform is long overdue.

The vitriol directed at MCCL during legislative sessions is continuous and unfair. There is grudging acknowledgment of the right of citizens to organize and lobby for a cause, but this powerful grass-roots group has the continuing audacity to propose restrictions on what the Star Tribune and others consider a settled issue. It is not.

When a woman's life is endangered by pregnancy I have performed abortions. I also recently joined in a federal lawsuit asking that the state of Minnesota be stopped from using my tax dollars to pay for nonmedical abortions. I have financially supported MCCL.

Confused? My position, like that of most of my fellow citizens, is not easily captured by the simplistic labels that have been used to frame this debate. We should finally acknowledge that moderate and unreservedly prochoice are not synonymous.

The prolife viewpoint has had limited success in the courts and the popular media over the last 26 years. You would think that if this position were mere zealotry its proponents would eventually get the message, give up and find another lost cause to champion. Imagine the shock when a recent poll of 1,000 women done by a prochoice organization showed continuing erosion of support for unrestricted abortion. Since 1994 the opinion of women (and the general public) has shifted. A majority now support restrictions on the reasons and gestational ages for this procedure. One can be moderate and prolife.

One of the many reasons to take a moderate prolife position is the consistency of the argument. The designation of the fetus as a blob of tissue was abandoned long ago by abortion advocates. Most now acknowledge that abortion takes a human life but even so it is claimed that this is a necessary part of modern life.

This grudging acknowledgment of the humanity of the fetus is inconvenient and a prochoice albatross. The latest tactic is to aver that the fetus is some type of less valuable human life. The new (and insoluble) problem is to avoid or ignore the frightening historical record of previous attempts to redefine full humanity. Many well-intentioned and conscientious people have never thoroughly examined their position on the issue of abortion. My advice to prochoice advocates is to take a good long look at your blind spot.

The liberal and progressive movements have a justifiably proud history of support for the disadvantaged and vulnerable, yet they have betrayed their very souls on this issue. It is possible to support both the women in unplanned pregnancies and their unborn children. It is time to forsake the incongruity of being for the little guy in every instance except the intrauterine one. It is time to support abortion reform.