

Public Health

January 17, 1973

Dr. Mildred Jefferson
Boston University Medical Center
720 Harrison Avenue, Suite 501
Boston, Massachusetts 02134

Dear Dr. Jefferson:

I hope you won't mind my writing to you, but I had to tell you how truly great you were in your testimony on the "Advocates" program regarding abortion. Yours was the most clear-cut exposition on this problem I have ever heard--or read. (I have a transcript of the entire debate.)

Several years ago, I was faced with the issue of whether to sign a California abortion bill. The author of the bill favored abortion on demand, but volunteered to amend the bill to whatever I would sign.

I must confess to never having given the matter of abortion any serious thought until that time. No other issue since I've been in office has caused me to do so much study and soul-searching. My final decision was a bill based on the theory of self-defense--the right of a woman to take life, even that of her own unborn child, in defense of her own. Precautions were taken for medical review to insure such an operation was necessary to protect the life and health of the patient.

This system broke down almost immediately, particularly in the area of mental health. Psychiatrists were willing to give five-minute diagnoses of suicidal tendencies in wholesale lots. Now we have the court ruling which has made California one of the abortion-on-demand states.

Dr. Mildred Jefferson

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I wish I could have heard your views before our legislation was passed. You made it irrefutably clear that an abortion is the taking of a human life. I'm grateful to you.

Sincerely,

RONALD REAGAN
Governor

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