



S.C. Debate Includes Exchange Between Santorum, Paul on Pro-life Credentials

During the section of the debate on abortion, Santorum took personal offense over Paul's stated opposition to federal funding for abortion, birth control, and such. Attacking Paul's legislative record on abortion, Santorum claimed that the 12-term Texas congressman had voted for "right to life" legislation only 50 percent of the time. "[You] say that you are someone who stands up for the right to life," challenged the former Pennsylvania Senator, but "you repeatedly vote against bills on a federal level to promote the right to life."

Paraphrasing Paul's position on abortion as something that ought to be "an individual, personal decision, or a state decision," Santorum fairly sang out the received opinion of mainstream pro-life groups, declaring that "life should be protected and you should have the willingness to stand up on a federal level — or on any level of government — and protect ... what our Declaration [of Independence] protects, which is the right from our creator to life. And that is a federal issue, not a state issue."



Earlier in the week during campaigning in South Carolina, reported [Politico.com](#), Santorum had blasted Paul for allowing his libertarian views to trump "Judeo-Christian values," specifically related to the abortion issue. "He doesn't vote for anything restricting abortion on a federal level because he doesn't think the federal government should be involved in restricting abortion," Santorum said of Paul during one campaign stop. "Well, that's just wrong! The bottom line is that we need to have restrictions on abortion."

During the debate, Congressman Paul responded that he and Santorum "have a disagreement on how we approach" the issue of abortion. Paul explained that in his understanding of the Constitution, oversight of "almost all the problems" now encumbering the federal government is left to the individual states, including the issue of abortion. "I see abortion as a violent act," Paul said with some passion, but explained that "all other violence is handled by the states — murder, burglary — those are state issues. Don't try to say that I am less pro-life because I want to be particular about the way we [protect the unborn] and allow the states the prerogative...."

As he has on numerous occasions, Paul explained that if the states were allowed to write their own laws



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on January 20, 2012

on the issue of abortion, and the jurisdiction over abortion were taken away from the courts via a majority vote in Congress, then “you repeal *Roe v. Wade* overnight, instead of waiting year after year to change the court system.”

To be clear, in challenging Paul on his pro-life record, Santorum was capitalizing on the trend in recent months to paint Congressman Paul as the least pro-life of all the Republican presidential candidates. But as Joe Wolverton recently pointed out in [The New American](#), in reality Paul is “so ardently opposed to abortion that earlier this year he declared the right to life ‘[the most important issue of our age](#).’”

Congressman Paul is also the only candidate who has connected the end of legalized abortion to the battle to save our republic. As Wolverton noted, Paul declares in his book [Liberty Defined](#) that a society which “readily condones abortion invites attacks on personal liberty. If all life is not precious, how can all liberty be held up as important? It seems that if some life can be thrown away, our right to personally choose what is best for us is more difficult to defend. I’ve become convinced that resolving the abortion issue is required for a healthy defense of a free society.”

Unfortunately, the fact that he has insisted upon appealing to the U.S. Constitution to secure the end to the legalized murder of children has somehow made Paul a pariah to many mainstream “right to life” groups — and to some of their supporters.

Instead, taking their cues from the self-appointed “social conservative” leaders who met recently in Texas to crown the approved conservative candidate of the evangelical voting block, many have embraced Santorum, whose own “right to life” record is alarming, to say the least.

As noted recently by [The New American’s Alex Newman](#), while serving as a Republican U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania, Santorum backed such [pro-abortion candidates as Senator Arlen Specter](#), and voted to continue the [federal funds flowing to Planned Parenthood](#), America’s premier abortion provider and profiteer. Beyond those curious moves, noted Newman, “Santorum also [voted for](#) the Democrat-sponsored ‘Freedom of Access to [Abortion] Clinic Entrances Act,’ legislation purportedly making it a federal crime to ‘interfere’ with a person seeking to terminate a pregnancy. As critics warned at the time, the bill has been used with [increasing frequency](#) to [prosecute peaceful protesters](#).”

Nonetheless, Santorum has succeeded in convincing many pro-life voters that he is firmly on their side in the battle to end abortion. During a pro-life forum sponsored by [Personhood USA](#) in late December, he told an online and radio audience that if he were President he would promote federal legislation to “recognize life from conception to natural death as what it is, a human life.”

But pro-lifers used the most recent Personhood, USA forum, January 18 in Greenville, South Carolina, to attack Santorum as a “wolf in sheep’s clothing” relative to the abortion issue. According to the [DailyBeast.com](#), as Santorum was inside at the town hall meeting highlighting his pro-life bona fides, someone was out in the parking lot tagging cars with a flyer from a pro-life activist who claimed that she had been a Santorum supporter “before I began digging into his record.”

The activist, who identified herself as Elizabeth Leichert from Parker, S.C., noted that before their marriage Santorum’s wife had lived for six years with a well-known abortionist, and ended by pointing out the former Senator’s funding vote for Planned Parenthood. The letter writer said that she was “worried the facts about Rick Santorum won’t get out in time for this South Carolina Primary, and pro-lifers will be fooled into voting [for] someone like Rick Santorum who DOES NOT share our values.”

Photos of Rick Santorum (top) and Ron Paul: AP Images



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