

**YOUNGSTOWN AREA JEWISH FEDERATION
JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL
STATEMENT ON RIGHT TO REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE
Approved 7/23/1990; Amended 1/8/03; Reaffirmed 6/24/19; Amended 6/27/22**

The Jewish Community Relations Council of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation believes that individual liberties and rights guaranteed by the Constitution are cornerstones of a free society. Public policy in a pluralistic society must affirm the Constitutional right of individuals to make private decisions of conscience such as those regarding reproductive choice. Government intrusion into private decision-making processes can lead to a deterioration of individual rights and a weakening of the wall separating church and state.

The Jewish community shares with others the reverence for life on the one hand and our pluralistic society's concern for individual rights and religious liberty on the other. Jewish teaching and tradition places the highest value on the sanctity of all human life and a very high value on the potential for human life of an as-yet unborn fetus. Decision about abortion may involve theological assumptions concerning when life begins and when and why abortion is permitted or forbidden. These assumptions differ within the Jewish community due in part to the complexity of Jewish law on the issue of abortion. Likewise, these assumptions among different religious communities also differ. Therefore, government attempts to legislate this matter, if based on one particular set of theological assumptions, invade the religious liberty and religious pluralism guaranteed to individuals by the First Amendment. In this area of religious concern, private religious conscience must be protected.

The JCRC believes that the issues regarding reproductive choice require a moral decision to be made by an individual on the basis of value system and heritage, in light of such consultations as appear appropriate to such individuals. Therefore, we oppose any governmental action, including attempts by Constitutional Amendment, which would interfere with an individual's right to reproductive choice.

The YAJF acknowledges that the above statement may not reflect the views of the entire Jewish community and its religious institutions.