

Abortion's Varied States

U.S. Rates Down, Others Up

WASHINGTON, D.C., SEPT. 3, 2005 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The level of abortions is dropping in the United States, but rising in Spain and England. A July 19 article in the Washington Post analyzed a report published by the Alan Guttmacher Institute. The report, "Estimates of U.S. Abortion Incidence in 2001 and 2002," was released May 19.

According to the pro-abortion institute, U.S. abortion rates continued to fall in 2001 and 2002, although the rate of decline has slowed since the early 1990s.

The report, which the institute cautions is based on provisional statistics, estimates that 1,303,000 abortions took place in the United States in 2001, a drop of 0.8% from 2000. In 2002 there was a further decline of 0.8%, to 1,293,000.

The Guttmacher Institute's study also said that there are significant variations among states, and within population subgroups. For example, while the abortion rate declined among most groups between 1994 and 2000, it increased among poor women and women on Medicaid.

In its article the Washington Post noted that black and Hispanic women have higher rates of abortion, accounting for 32% and 20%, respectively, of the total number. Higher abortion rates also exist among low-income women. No fewer than 60% of women who had abortions in 2000 had incomes of less than twice the poverty level -- below \$28,000 per year for a family of three.

Among age groups 56% of women who ended their pregnancies are in their 20s, while 15- to 19-year-olds account for 19%.

An analysis of the report in the July 26 issue of the weekly publication Culture & Cosmos observed that 53% of women who had unintended pregnancies used a contraceptive method during the month they got pregnant. Another striking fact is that marriage plays an important role in reducing abortions. Married women accounted for only 17% of abortions, and even when they became pregnant unexpectedly, they are less likely to abort.

Pro-life groups continue to make efforts to reduce the number of abortions. In recent times the center of activity has been at the state level, according to a June 13 report in the Christian Science Monitor.

The article quoted a researcher from the Guttmacher Institute, Elizabeth Nash, who said that in the first five months of 2005 there had been 16 bills at state level regarding the activities of abortion clinics. Initiatives range from requiring parental notification for teen-agers who seek abortions, to attempts to obtain legal recognition for the personhood of a fetus.

According to the Monitor, recent laws approved include:

-- Texas Governor Rick Perry signing a law requiring minors wanting an abortion to get written parental consent. The law also places restrictions on abortion after 26 weeks of pregnancy.

-- Florida Governor Jeb Bush signing legislation giving the state increased oversight of clinics that offer second-trimester abortions.

-- A Georgia law requiring a 24-hour waiting period and parental notification for minors. It also specifies that the doctor must inform the woman of the fetus' age, alternatives to abortion, and the likelihood that the fetus will feel pain during the abortion.

-- An Indiana law now requiring abortion doctors to notify patients that they can see an ultrasound image and listen to the fetus' heartbeat.