http://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/mdsn-protest-singers-s5.jpg



***The pro-life, pro-choice issue is a political football that both major party's use to whip up their base. What if we stopped taking the bait, and focused instead on solving this incredibly sensitive issue that the ruling elite clearly do not want to see resolved?***

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ALTOONA, WI - Here's a truth about American politics that never seems to get acknowledged much less discussed: No major party in this country actually wants to outlaw abortion.

One says it does, but its actions tell a different story. Republicans control both houses of Congress and the White House, so they could make a law banning abortion across the nation. The law surely would be challenged in court but the ideologically conservative Republican appointees who have made up the majority on the U.S. Supreme Court since 1971 would have the final say. You'd expect them to uphold the law because Republican presidents have consistently considered an anti-abortion judicial record a key litmus test of the fitness of any judge to serve on the nation's highest court.

For that matter, those Republican-appointed Supreme Court justices needn't have waited for an act of Congress. At any time during the past four decades, the court could have taken up any number of abortion cases, overturned *Roe v. Wade*, and outlawed abortion. They have that power. Year after year, they have chosen not to use it.

In Wisconsin, Republicans control both houses of the state Legislature as well as the governor's office. There's nothing stopping them from making a law prohibiting abortion. A state Supreme Court controlled by Republican-backed justices would presumably bless such a law. Like their

national counterparts, Wisconsin Republicans have had the power to outlaw abortion. They have repeatedly chosen not to do so.

It appears they realize that outlawing abortion won't make the procedure disappear, it will only make it far more dangerous and even deadly. So they concentrate on obstructing and inconveniencing the women who seek abortions and the medical professionals who perform them. But most of all, they focus on using this deeply personal and intensely emotional issue as a political football, which they have kicked around for more than 40 years. They have used it to divide people and then harvest the votes these divisions produce. They have shown over an extended period of time that they have every intention of keeping this game going indefinitely.

There is glaring irony and hypocrisy here. The Republican Party has gone to the greatest lengths to market itself as the party of limited government and personal freedom. When it comes to the private lives of Americans, Republicans favor a very intrusive and meddlesome government. They don't trust the choices Americans make in the bedroom and the bathroom and the doctor's office. They want government to have a looming presence in those places.

More than anything, they want to keep people at each other's throats. They want to keep us arguing about whether abortion should be legal or illegal. For 40-some years, we've kept kicking their football. We've screamed at each other, we've harassed and attacked each other. Sometimes it's led to unspeakable acts of violence. All done to try to settle a matter that those in power have proven to be keenly interested in keeping unresolved.

Imagine where we would be on this issue if we had instead spent all this time looking for common ground on how to make abortion unnecessary. We would have talked so much more about how best to deal with sex education, how best to promote birth control and family planning, how best to combat poverty. We might have even hashed out some differences by now.

Think about what might be possible if we now chose to stop kicking the political football, and focused on starting a conversation on this incredibly sensitive topic that the ruling elite clearly do not want us to have.

— *Mike McCabe*