

# TAKING STOCK IN ABORTION DATA

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Those who are pro-life, as the readers of *Catalyst* surely are, refuse to take comfort in data that indicate a decline in abortions. That's understandable. But there is a difference between taking comfort and taking stock: the latter means to assess, possibly leading to a reappraisal of conditions. On that score, the latest abortion data are encouraging.

The Centers for Disease Control recently released its new "abortion surveillance" report covering the years 2002 to 2011. During that time, the total number of abortions decreased by 13 percent. The abortion rate—the number of abortions per 1,000 women age 15 to 44—decreased 14 percent, and the number of abortions relative to births dropped 12 percent.

While no one is suggesting we pop the champagne, it is a serious mistake not to take stock in the data: the vector of change is moving our way and the abortion industry is not happy with the results. Too bad for them.

By nature, I am an optimist. But I hasten to add that I am not a dreamer—I live in the real world. No one will find me basking in these figures; on the other hand, I have little patience for the doom and gloom crowd. It is simply not possible to win a battle in the culture war if we are psychologically predisposed to despair. This is more than a strategic verity—it is a hard-cold assessment of what the numbers mean.

In 1980, when abortions peaked, 1.3 million kids were killed. In 2011, the figure was 730,322. That's a difference of well over a half million. But even these numbers mask the reality: when we speak about a life that has been spared, we are not speaking about raw datum; rather, each number represents a

unique boy or girl. And it is because our side has fought so valiantly that the numbers continue to decline. That is something to take stock in.

Young women, those in their twenties, or younger, account for over 70 percent of abortions. However, teens are having fewer abortions: in 1980, they accounted for 29.2 percent; in 2011, they made up 13.9 percent. Women above 35 witnessed an uptick, the largest increase occurring among women over 40. In almost all cases, it is unmarried women who are having an abortion (they account for 85.5 percent of the total). A high number—over 46 percent—had at least one previous abortion.

While abortion rates have declined for all races and ethnicities, including blacks, African American women have an abortion rate that is three times the white rate; they easily outpace Hispanics. With regard to the latter, the abortion rate among Hispanic women is now only slightly higher than the national average.

It is a sad commentary on the black leadership in this country that few have chosen to speak to this issue. Dr. Alveda King, the niece of Rev. Martin Luther King, has been outspoken, as has evangelical activist Kay James. More recently, Dr. Ben Carson, a neurosurgeon, has condemned abortion. But where has Al Sharpton been? Where has he been on the epidemic of black males murdering black males? Blacks are being killed inside the womb at a rate far above that of everyone else, and they are being shot in the street on a daily basis—by their own people—and the only thing that exercises this man is when a white cop kills a black man.

Sharpton is the best friend Planned Parenthood ever had. The abortion mill giant accounts for almost half the abortions in the nation (46 percent), killing black kids at a knockout rate. Sharpton could use his influence to rail against Planned Parenthood but his left-wing donors wouldn't take kindly to such a gambit. So he politely shuts up.

What makes this so sick is Planned Parenthood's racist origins. Margaret Sanger, its founder, felt it was her duty to "weed out" what she labeled the "undesirables." And just who might they be? Blacks, of course.

To this day, Planned Parenthood continues to focus on African Americans, which is why they have so many of their clinics in their neighborhoods. At least Sanger did not support killing blacks in the womb: she was a big time supporter of birth control but she was also anti-abortion. Sharpton, by contrast, is not opposed to either artificial birth control or abortion. Maybe that is because the "Reverend" never had an opportunity to study the issue in divinity school: he was ordained at the age of nine, not long after he got off his tricycle.

The fight for the unborn should unite liberals and conservatives the way the fight for black civil rights should have united both groups in the 1960s. Shame on conservatives for not standing with Rev. Martin Luther King back then, and shame on liberals for not fighting for the rights of the unborn today, a disproportionate number of whose victims are black.

The anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* is never a happy one for pro-lifers, but given that the data are encouraging, we need to take stock in those numbers and press forward with renewed vigor. After all, many lives are dependent on our resolve.