



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on February 21, 2017

France Criminalizes Pro-life Speech

“Freedom of expression does not signify a right to lying,” asserted French Minister for Families, Children, and Women’s Rights Laurence Rossignol. A new law in France imposes a punishment of a maximum of two years in prison and a fine of \$30,000 for “spreading or transmitting allegations or indications liable to intentionally mislead, with the purpose of deterring [from abortion], on the characteristics or medical consequences of a voluntary interruption” of pregnancy. In other words, if a person asserts, on a pro-life website, that abortion could lead to certain adverse medical situations for the pregnant woman, and the government considers that “misexplaining the need for a new law in France,” that person could be criminally prosecuted.



“Voluntary interruption” of pregnancy is, of course, euphemistic language for abortion, and speaking out against what one considers the taking of innocent human life — unborn babies — through abortion is considered criminal in France.

Clear language has been a frequent victim in the abortion argument since even before the infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision of 1973. Whenever referring to an unborn child in the womb, the pro-abortionists start speaking Latin, instead of English, calling the child a “fetus” — which means “young one.” And, whereas we used to refer to a miscarriage as “losing the baby,” the pro-abortionists call it “losing a pregnancy.” Then, there is the euphemistic “reproductive rights.” Finally, those who favor abortion on demand prefer the term “pro-choice,” without saying what they are “pro-choice” about. When reporting on the dispute, American leftist journalists use the language of those who favor abortion on demand, giving the “pro” term to those who are for legalized abortion, and the “anti” word to those who want to defend the unborn child, calling them “anti-abortion.”

The bill in the National Assembly in France was designed to stop the “electronic” or “online” dissemination of any information that has the intent of dissuading women from seeking an abortion to end their pregnancy. But the wording is so broadly written that any person, or any group, that speaks out publicly against the grisly practice, calling attention to the dangers or risks of having an abortion, can become subject to criminal prosecution.

In France, where abortion has long been legal as a purely elective (for any reason) procedure and totally funded by tax money as a “fundamental right,” the socialist government was moved to action after it became known that Google searches made for abortion providers also took women to pro-life websites, set up to discourage abortion. The pro-life sites explained that there are risks associated with abortion, and suggested places where a pregnant woman could go if she wished to seek help in keeping the baby. The pro-life groups assert that abortion can have negative side effects and cause health



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problems or psychological consequences. (On a personal note, this writer met a woman years ago who said that she had an abortion when she was 17 years old, and had nightmares for about 10 years after that. That would appear to confirm the pro-life websites. The woman eventually became a Christian and a pro-life activist).

In contrast, the government's Ministry of Health created a pro-abortion website that provided information on access to abortion. The Ministry of Health contends that the pro-life sites perpetuate "misconceptions" about the procedure. On the pro-abortion government site, there is a page on what the Ministry of Health calls "misinformation about voluntary interruption of pregnancy," a page in which the government argues that pro-life sites are not really information sites, but are rather just pretending they are. (This sounds a bit like the claim that "fake news" allegedly helped Donald Trump win the U.S. presidential election last November.) Instead, on the government sites, women are urged to go to Planned Parenthood or other pro-abortion sites that provide abortion clinic addresses.

In 2001, the government banned "moral and psychological pressure searching to hinder abortion." This law was created to stop the activities of pro-life activists in which they spoke to women planning to obtain an abortion, or held demonstrations near abortion providers in clinics or public hospitals. An elderly and nearly blind pro-lifer was fined for the crime of giving knitted baby boots to a woman in the stairway of the building where Planned Parenthood had its offices in Paris.

Regarding the latest law, Rossignol said, "anti-abortion activists will remain free to express their hostility to abortion, provided they are honest about who they are, what they do, and what they want." If a pro-life site does not do that, said Rossignol, then it is guilty of "manipulating minds."

And who will decide whether or not pro-life material is "misleading," or involved in "manipulating minds"? A pro-abortion government bureaucrat, of course. Presently, government-published "information" on abortion uses what pro-lifers contend is misleading information. For example, the socialist Hollande government refers to a surgical abortion in very odd language — calling it an "aspiration of the egg." Rossignol even argued in the National Assembly that "abortion is not the removing of a life."

Clearly, the law is intended to chill the freedom of speech of the pro-life movement in France. On the other hand, there is no provision in the law to punish pro-abortionists for disseminating "misleading" information.

There is opposition to the new law. Jean-Marie Le Mene, president of the Fondation Jérôme-Lejeune, stated, "That which dissuades from abortion is not false information, but correct information." The Republican (center-right) party called the law an infringement on freedom of expression, and voted in opposition. Additionally, they have vowed to ask the Constitutional Council to set the law aside as being contrary to the French Constitution's protections of free speech.

Unfortunately, what has happened historically in France is all too familiar to those in America who have seen our own Republicans in action. Past laws against abortion have been opposed by the Republican Party of France when they are in the minority. Once back in the majority, however, they have made no moves to roll back these laws, which increasingly advance the cause of those who favor abortion.

No doubt pro-abortionists in the United States have taken note of these anti-free-speech and pro-abortion actions in France by that country's socialist government. If the American Left had the votes, would they enact a similar law here?



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