

Reproductive Rights in the 2004 Election



Reproductive rights and health are important issues in the 2004 election. The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice Inc. has compared the records and statements of presidential candidates President George W. Bush (Republican) and Senator John Kerry (Democratic) on these issues for informational purposes. The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice is non-partisan and does not take positions on candidates.

Issues	George W. Bush	John Kerry
Women's Right to Choose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Opposes abortion except for rape, incest and when a woman's life is endangered.¹ ★ Signed "partial-birth abortion" ban, which outlaws procedures used in second- and third-trimester abortions² and has been found unconstitutional by three courts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Promises to protect the constitutional right to choose. Believes women should be able to make this decision in keeping with their faith and conscience.³ ★ Voted to strike down "partial-birth abortion" ban because it lacks a health exception and will undermine right to choose.⁴
Religious Freedom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Introduced the "faith-based initiative," directly funding religious organizations for social services.⁵ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Said will "re-craft" faith-based initiative to guarantee church/state separation but won't eliminate it.⁶
Federal and Supreme Court Nominees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Appointed judges who ruled against abortion and civil liberties in 75% of their cases.⁷ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Said will nominate only judges who have demonstrated support for constitutional rights.⁸
Contraceptive Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Proposed eliminating contraceptive coverage from federal employees' health benefits.⁹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Co-sponsored the Equity in Prescription Insurance and Contraceptive Coverage Act.¹⁰
Sexuality Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Doubled funding to \$270 million for abstinence-only education (does not include information about contraception and disease prevention).¹¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Stood with two other Senators in urging Bush to expand the definition of abstinence education to fund more comprehensive programs.¹²
Stem Cell Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Unilaterally restricted federal funding for research with embryonic stem cells to limited number of cell lines.¹³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Joined 57 other Senators in asking Bush to expand federal funding for embryonic stem cell research.¹⁴
United Nations family planning program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ In 2002, 2003, and 2004 blocked Congress from funding UN family planning services.¹⁵ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Has committed to restoring funding to UN for family planning services that prevent abortions and maternal and child deaths.¹⁶
"Global Gag Rule"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Re-instated the "global gag rule," which denies funds to agencies overseas that provide information about abortion.¹⁷ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Said he will overturn the "global gag rule" and restore U.S. global leadership in family planning.¹⁸
Military Abortion Ban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Supports policy banning women in the military overseas from obtaining an abortion at base hospitals even with their own funds.¹⁹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Supports the Murray-Snowe amendment, which would lift the ban.²⁰

¹ www.cnn.com/election/2004, 9/13/04; ² Nation in Brief, Washington Post, 9/9/04; ³ www.johnkerry.com/issues/women 9/13/04; ⁴ Project Vote Smart www.vote-smart.org
⁵ www.interfaithalliance.org, 9/13/04; ⁶ www.johnkerry.com, 9/9/04; ⁷ "Bush Judges Most Conservative on Rights," Reuters, 9/9/04; ⁸ www.cnn.com/election/2004 9/13/04;
⁹ www.whitehouse.gov/omb/legislative, 7/24/01; ¹⁰ Thomas http://thomas.loc.gov; ¹¹ President's Budget for FY 2005 www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/fy05; ¹² Letter to Max Baucus & Charles E. Grassley, 6/11/02; ¹³ National Institutes of Health http://stemcells.nih.gov/policy/NIHFedPolicy.asp; ¹⁴ Letter to President Bush http://feinstein.senate.gov, 6/7/04;
¹⁵ SIECUS Policy Update http://www.siecus.org; ¹⁶ http://www.johnkerry.com 7/18/04; ¹⁷ "Kerry: Bush Relies on Ideology in Pursuit of Science," USA Today 6/22/04; ¹⁸ Ibid;
¹⁹ "Senate votes to repeal overseas military abortion ban," Washington Post, 6/22/04; ²⁰ Project Vote Smart, www.vote-smart.org