

*From Ms Udall,*  
**f.y.i.**

---

f.y.i.—for your information—is a periodic summary of legislative activity of the Congress of the United States and of proposals and general information of interest to the residents of the 2nd Congressional District of Arizona.

---

## **Abortion**

I understand and can appreciate the strong emotions aroused by the issue of abortion. I want to try and outline some of my feelings about the subject, because it is an area of continuing interest.

I dislike the idea of abortion. I come from a large family, and have six children of my own. I have dealt with abortion both as a congressman and as a county prosecutor in Tucson. It has never been an easy issue, and it never will be.

I think we ought to have a goal in our society in which abortions are absent. The plain fact is that abortion laws don't stop abortions. Throughout history, desperate women have tried to end unwanted pregnancies. That many of us would prefer to see that not happen has not altered public behavior. I saw an estimate recently that there are alive today in the United States, perhaps 25 or 30 million women who have either had abortions or have counseled or participated in the arrangements for an abortion.

We have learned in a painful kind of way that society shouldn't put laws on the books unless we are prepared to enforce them. I just don't believe that judges, juries and prosecutors are going to give 25 million Americans a criminal record and put them in jail. Unless we have broad public agreement on one or the other side of any issue, laws don't work. Prohibition is a good case in point. So are our laws regarding marijuana.

In 1973, the Supreme Court ruled that neither the federal government nor the states may interfere with a woman's private decision to have an abortion, in the first three months of pregnancy. State legislatures can and have placed restrictions on abortions sought in the last two-thirds of a pregnancy. It would be preferable to many of us to find a compromise that could appeal to both groups on both sides of this question. That doesn't seem forthcoming, however, and the Supreme Court decision is all we are left with.

Occasionally in a democracy, an issue comes along which is so intensely personal that it cannot be resolved by government or politicians imposing their will on the nation. Today, abortion seems to be one of those issues. I hope that is not always so.

SI/102279