

ABORTION LAW CHANGE?

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'Performed in Sweden . . .'

Public Agrees With Abortion Action Taken by Mrs. Finkbine

Says Bringing Deformed Child Into World Would Have Been Wrong; Catholics Disagree

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PRINCETON, N.J., Sept. 18 — With the case of Mrs. Robert Finkbine raising the question of a general re-examination of U.S. abortion laws, what is the state of American public opinion on this issue today?

For the action she took in going to Sweden for the abortion that she could not have legally in her home state of Arizona, Mrs. Finkbine won the sympathy of a majority of the public.

The Phoenix mother of four resorted to this step after discovering that she had taken pills containing the drug thalidomide which might cause her unborn child to be born deformed. Arizona courts had ruled against her having the abortion performed in that state.

Those who support Mrs. Finkbine's action tend to feel that bringing a deformed child into the world would have imposed too great hardship both on the child and the family.

A 38-year-old Los Angeles attorney reasoned: "The probability of the child being deformed was too high to justify the consequences if the child were actually born deformed."

Criticism of the abortion performed in Sweden is based chiefly on two arguments: 1) that there was no certainty that the child, if born, might not have been able to lead a happy life, and 2) that such action is morally wrong, that she was taking the life of another human being.

Gallup Poll reporters across the nation put the issue to the public as follows:

"As you may have heard or read, an Arizona woman recently had a LEGAL abortion in Sweden after having taken the drug thalidomide, which has been linked to birth defects. Do you think this woman did the right thing or the wrong thing in having this abortion operation?"

Opinion nationwide:
Right thing 52%
Wrong thing 32
No opinion 16

Among Roman Catholics interviewed in the survey, the weight of sentiment is opposed to the action taken by Mrs. Finkbine. The Catholic Church officially condemns abortion.

A 33-year-old executive from Livingston, N.J.—himself a Catholic—voiced these reasons for his opposition:

"It's murder. You are dealing with a human soul once conception has taken place."

A significant minority of Catholics, on the other hand, is in sympathy with the moves taken by Mrs. Finkbine.

The views of Catholics and Protestants interviewed:

	Caths.	Prots.
Right thing	33%	56%
Wrong thing	49	27
No opinion	18	17

Analysis of the results also reveals that there is little difference of opinion between men and women on this question. Men, however, are slightly more in favor of the abortion action than are women, as the following table shows:

	Men	Women
Right thing	54%	50%
Wrong thing	30	33
No opinion	16	17

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