

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/my-grandmother-died-because-of-an-illegal-abortion/2016/03/04/615b152e-e0c4-11e5-8d98-4b3d9215ade1_story.html

Cover Page

Context/Exigence: The text is timely as it was published right after the Supreme Court was hearing a very serious Texas abortion clinic case. Legalizing abortion has also been a “hot topic” with presidential candidates in relation to the upcoming presidential election. There has also been much discussion regarding “defund Planned Parenthood” movements and others like it. Currently, in the United States, abortion is legal but subject to restriction by the state governments. This allows for some states, like Texas, to have much stricter laws surrounding abortion and abortion clinics. The Texas abortion clinic case was the first abortion case that the Supreme Court has heard since 2007. If this case were to succeed, the law would restrict the number of abortion clinics in the entire state of Texas to around 10. This would create difficulties for many women trying to access the clinics.

Purpose: Dinsmore likely wrote this to try and get others to feel the same emotions her family has been dealing with and feeling for decades. She is possibly trying to introduce opinions to people who don’t know about the horrible consequences of illegal abortions. She definitely seems to be promoting the “Pro-Choice” movement. While some people do hold an opinion somewhere in between, many choose one side or the other. The other side of the argument is the “Pro-Life” movement. The “Pro-Choice” movement supports legal abortions, which allows women to make their own decisions regarding their bodies. The “Pro-Life” movement supports making abortion illegal, usually citing the importance of the life of the fetus as justification.

Audience: The author wants to directly reach the Supreme Court Justices who are possibly going to make the decisions on the abortion case. This would also include anyone who works with the Justices that might share their opinions. Trying to get the cause to the justices is probably her main goal, however, she at least is trying to get anybody who supports “Pro-Choice” to also support her cause. People who support “Pro-Life could even read the article” the author is just sharing her story and opinion and it can be shared to the opposite side of the argument.

Rhetorical Analysis

Women's reproductive health, specifically abortion, has been a topic of discussion and controversy in the United States for decades. Discussion of abortion rights has been in the news lately as the presidential election is coming up, and on March 3rd, 2016, the Supreme Court of the United States was hearing a case regarding Texas abortion laws. People all over the country have been expressing their opinions on the case, in order to try and share the way they feel.

In an article from The Washington Post, Christine Dinsmore writes to share her opinions on the abortion debate. Dinsmore uses plenty of pathos to support her argument that women should have access to legal abortions if they want. Dinsmore eventually gets to her claim after telling the story of her grandmother, who died of an illegal abortion when her own mother was just a child. She begins by saying that her grandmother "died at age 36," with already having seven children "ranging in age from 11 months to 10 years." Dinsmore really focuses on the emotional appeal while talking about the grief and hardships that her "motherless children" faced. Her death "annihilated [her youngest daughter's] self esteem," while the older ones "were whisked away and placed in separate, sex-segregated Catholic orphanages." Another daughter "was placed in foster care, where she died a short time later." With every one of her children, "the psychological issues of abandonment and trauma played out differently."

The religious aspects of the family's daily life were detrimental to their furthering grief. The family "clung to the church and was humiliated that Maria had an abortion." The fact that the abortion was considered highly illegal, "further stigmatized the family." Dinsmore chooses these words and phrases to make the audience sympathize and feel pity for the children and the family. She continues to do this when writing about her mother as she reached the end of her life. "She pined for 'Mama,'" and there was always a "void," that a loving mother would have filled.

She states her mother lived “ninety-three years of grief.” The words like “pined,” “void,” and “grief” are all words that support the pathetic appeal and make the audience feel emotions.

All of this pathos leads to Dinsmore’s claim that “I hope the justices will remember women such as [her grandmother] as they deliberate [the abortion case].” Dinsmore is trying to get people to support her opinion that a woman should have a choice to an abortion, and that it should be legal. She does this by using many examples of pathos regarding the death of her grandmother and the horrible repercussions that her children faced after her death by an illegal abortion.