

matter what we say, it may well be that there is a foregone conclusion how people are going to vote, they have already decided. It also may well be that there are enough loopholes in the way the bill is written that kids will figure out how to get around it and they will not be as hurt by it as I fear that they will be. And, lastly, I'm hesitant because this is really not where I like to put my focus. I prefer to put my energies into establishing those policies and those systems that support women so that they truly do have a choice about whether or not they have an abortion. But I can't leave it alone because it is too serious of an issue. There is no doubt that we have too many young people getting pregnant. We have too many young people having children, and we have too many young people getting abortions. These are serious issues of which I sincerely would like to do something about, would like to restrict them, if not eliminate them. The solutions will not come, though, unless we truly do listen to each other and are willing to look for the truth, rather than just for that information that supports our position. It will mean that we will have to look at this issue, not with locked minds, but with a focus not on winning the debate, but rather on coming up with the best possible policy for our young people. There is no doubt there are fundamental differences of opinion about abortion rates within these Chambers. There are those, like myself, who believe that the decision regarding pregnancy is personal and private, and that it is based on beliefs that emanate from cultural, religious, and philosophical foundations, and for that reason, these decisions are not to be made by government, but by the person who must be responsible for the consequences of that decision. There are those in this room who also with equal intensity believe that life is represented in conception, and for that reason, not only does government have a right, but perhaps even a responsibility to have something to say about every pregnancy regardless of the age. It may well be that there are those of us who believe that parents have a right to know everything about their young children and that they, and only they, are the ones that know what is best for their children, while others may believe that young people do have a right to privacy in terms of their sexual life, as well as their reproductive health, and that maybe it is possible that adults other than their parents can help them make thoughtful and good decisions. It is unfortunate in this debate that we always focus on our differences; unfortunate because we are not likely to change our opinions, and unfortunate because we are not likely to come up with good solutions and good policies for our young children.