

Justice Talking Listening Guide
THE SUPREME COURT TACKLES ABORTION:
A LOOK AT MANDATORY PARENTAL NOTIFICATION
11/21/05

SHOW SUMMARY

In a New Hampshire case challenging a law requiring parental notification for an abortion, the hotly contested issue is again before the United States Supreme Court. Join us on this edition of Justice Talking as we talk about whether a teenager has the right to have an abortion without her parents' involvement or without going before a judge to get permission.



Cynthia Gorney

• Part 1: **Cynthia Gorney**, a professor of journalism at U.C. Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism, and the author of *Articles of Faith, A Front Line History of the Abortion Wars*, speaks about how abortion laws work and what people think of them. **Segment Start Time – 2:12**



Cathy Ruse

• Part 2: Producer **Reese Ulrich** shares a story of one girl's experience that illustrates why many girls don't want to or can't tell their parents about having an abortion, and what it's like to go before a judge to get a waiver. **Segment Start Time – 9:07**



Louise Melling

• Part 3: In this section of the show, 15 and 16 year old girls share their opinions on whether a teen should legally have to tell her parents if she wants an abortion. Later in the show, parents voice their opinions on the issue. **Segment Start Times – 13:40 and 32:33**



Frances Kissling

• Part 4: **Cathy Ruse**, a senior fellow for research studies with the Family Research Council, a Christian advocacy organization, debates **Louise Melling**, director of the Reproductive Freedom Project of the American Civil Liberties Union about the various parental notification laws around the country. **Segment Start Time – 15:04**



Joe Feuerherd

• Part 5: Producer **Reese Ulrich** reports on a Catholic church in Woodland, California where one woman is working to give girls an alternative to abortion. **Segment Start Time – 26:58**

• Part 6: **Frances Kissling**, the president of Catholics for Free Choice, and **Joe Feuerherd**, Washington correspondent for the National Catholic Reporter, explain why they are pro-choice and pro-life, respectively, and why they are critical of others in their own camps. **Segment Start Times – 38:13 and 41:33**

The New York Times
LearningNetwork

Read the **New York Times Learning Network** article "Abortion Opponents Claim the Middle Ground" to learn more about learn about the anti-abortion movement's "incremental" approach to legislation in the United States.

http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/featured_articles/20040426monday.html



Host Margot Adler

Margot Adler is a National Public Radio correspondent based in NPR's New York Bureau. Adler has thirty years of experience as a radio host and reporter and is the author of several books. She lives in New York City with her husband and son.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Ayotte v. Planned Parenthood – This lawsuit challenges a New Hampshire law which requires doctors to ensure that a teenager has notified one of her parents at least 48 hours before performing an abortion on her. If the teenager is unwilling to talk with a parent, the law allows a teenager to go to court to prove that she is mature enough to make the decision on her own. The lower courts found the law unconstitutional and put it on hold because it includes no exception for medical emergencies. The U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the case on November 30, 2005.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the intended positive outcome of a parental notification law? What do critics of the law say are its unforeseen negative outcomes?
2. Should age matter as to whether or not someone should be able to seek confidential medical care?
3. Should the choice of abortion law be decided at the state or federal level?



Listen to the National Public Radio report "*Abortion in the United States: A Snapshot*" to hear historic recordings of three Supreme Court arguments on abortion and statistics on how many abortion are performed in the United States each year and other trends at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5126609>.