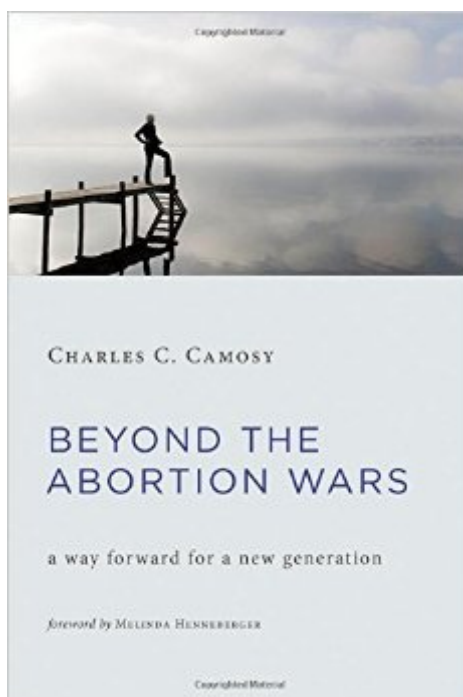


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Beyond The Abortion Wars: A Way Forward For A New Generation



Synopsis

Cuts through the mass confusion surrounding abortion and lays out solid common ground. The abortion debate in the United States is confused. Ratings-driven media coverage highlights extreme views and creates the illusion that we are stuck in a hopeless stalemate. In this book Charles Camosy argues that our polarized public discourse hides the fact that most Americans actually agree on the major issues at stake in abortion morality and law. Unpacking the complexity of the abortion issue, Camosy shows that placing oneself on either side of the typical polarizations -- pro-life vs. pro-choice, liberal vs. conservative, Democrat vs. Republican -- only serves to further confuse the debate and limits our ability to have fruitful dialogue. Camosy then proposes a new public policy that he believes is consistent with the beliefs of the broad majority of Americans and supported by the best ideas and arguments about abortion from both secular and religious sources.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Beyond the Abortion Wars: A Way Forward for a New Generation by Charles C. Camosy attempts to break down the divisive all or nothing form of public and political debate on abortion, address the nuances and come to a compromise position suitable for the vast majority. This commendable goal is not achieved in this ambitious book, though I don't believe it was for lack of honest effort. While Camosy tries to avoid the hardline dichotomies that rule abortion debates (liberal/conservative, secular/religious, etc) he never fully leaves behind the secular vs religious type of argument. Additionally, the part of the compromise that might be considered as the right/Republican

compromise calls for the types of assistance and security that should be in place regardless of any position on abortion. In exchange, the pro-choice side is supposed to pretty much capitulate on abortion. While he proposes legislation that would indeed help women and children (which shouldn't be tied to abortion but done simply because it is the right thing to do) he does not believe that re-criminalization of abortion would negatively impact women. Historically, abortions will take place whether they are legal or not. Those with money will find a safe avenue while those desperate will go back to, both figuratively and literally, the coat hanger. In other words, many of the women who get an abortion, particularly those who are financially unable or are afraid to let their fellow churchgoers know, risk serious injury and death. That would seem to me to be a negative impact. I do believe that Camosy sincerely tried to argue both sides but his background and own strong background makes it difficult to fully argue the points of most pro-choice advocates.

Professor Camosy's book is an important and incredibly timely new contribution to the abortion debates in the US. In light of the popularity of culture war framings of the relative stances on the abortion issue, perhaps one of the most refreshing features of this book is Camosy's hopeful analysis of the state of a public debate that many presume to have arrived at a stalemate. Examining the actual contours of public opinion, Camosy reveals the mismatch between the polarized representations of the state of opinion and the reality on the ground. Rather than abandoning persuasion and consensus-building for absolute political and social antagonism, Camosy recalls us to irenic and optimistic discourse between parties whose convictions may not be as irreconcilable as it first appears. My girlfriend is doing her doctoral research on the development of evangelical responses to abortion in the 1970 and 1980s. One of the themes that we have frequently discussed is the radical historical contingency and flexibility of party lines that many presume to be absolute and unalterable. Camosy exhibits a clear awareness of this fact and the underappreciated possibilities that it presents to participants in current debates who are prepared to forge charitable conversations with people of differing positions. Camosy's careful treatment of subjects such as abortion in the case of rape challenged me to re-evaluate my position on the matter. I am sure that my experience will be shared by readers of many persuasions, who may find that this book presents them with ways in which to give appropriate weight to positions they might formerly have dismissed as inimical to their central concerns, without having to surrender their concerns or principles in order to do so.

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