



# ABORTION RIGHTS UPHELD



Scan to review worksheet

Expemo code:  
19MA-E6XA-GC14



1

## Warm up

Discuss the questions in pairs or small groups.

1. What are laws concerning abortion like in your country?
2. Do you think that unborn babies should have legal rights?
3. Should parents have the right to abort a fetus if it has a medical condition? Why/why not?

2

## Focus on vocabulary

Part A: Match the words with the correct definitions.

- |                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. <u>extinct</u> (adj.)       | a. a type of lawyer who is trained to prepare cases and give advice on legal subjects |
| 2. <u>appeal</u> (v)           | b. overwhelmed or shocked by a profound loss or disappointment                        |
| 3. <u>flabbergasted</u> (adj.) | c. no longer in existence   |
| 4. <u>lawful</u> (adj.)        | d. feeling shocked, usually because of something unexpected                           |
| 5. <u>distraught</u> (adj.)    | e. legally allowed or permitted   |
| 6. <u>solicitor</u> (n)        | f. request a higher court of law to consider a decision again                         |
| 7. <u>devastated</u> (adj.)    | g. extremely worried, nervous, or upset   |

**Part B: Now complete the sentences with appropriate words from Part A.**

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ prepared the necessary documents before the case went to court.
2. After being sent to prison, the defendant's family were \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Although the company's actions were considered controversial, the judge ruled they were still \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The endangered species is expected to be \_\_\_\_\_ within 20 years.
5. If they lose the case, they will \_\_\_\_\_ to the Supreme Court.
6. He felt \_\_\_\_\_ because of the surprising decision.
7. The man was \_\_\_\_\_ after he lost everything in the disaster.

**Part C: Personalize the vocabulary by sharing your opinions with your classmates using the questions below.**

1. Have you ever been **flabbergasted** by something you saw on the news?
2. Have you done anything small that wasn't completely **lawful**?
3. Can you **appeal** to anyone at work or school if a decision is made that you don't agree with?
4. Have you or someone you know ever hired a **solicitor**?

**3****Understanding the main idea**

You are going to listen to a news report about a woman who lost her case, that it is discriminatory to allow terminations up to the point of birth of fetuses with Down's syndrome. Listen to the report then decide if the following statements are true (T) or false (F).

1. Heidi Crowter feels that people like her are irrelevant in the eyes of the law. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Heidi Crowter believes there is nothing more that she can do. \_\_\_\_\_
3. The court stated that the issue should be decided elsewhere. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Liz Crowter does not believe that politicians are in a position to help them. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Liz Crowter is less affected by the verdict than her daughter. \_\_\_\_\_
6. The other claimant was encouraged to do something she did not want to. \_\_\_\_\_



## 4 Talking point

In pairs discuss the following questions.

1. Do you agree with the judge that the issue should be resolved in parliament?
2. Are there any disadvantages to having a system in which decisions can be appealed?
3. Why do you think different countries have such different laws in regard to abortion?
4. Do you think the fact that one of the claimants has Down's syndrome should affect the decision?

## 5 Reading: scanning

**Part A:** You are going to read a text about a decision to uphold pregnant women's rights to abort fetuses with certain disabilities. Find expressions or phrases which mean the same as the following.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (n, paragraph 1): the act of ending something or the end of something
2. \_\_\_\_\_ (v, paragraph 1): treat someone or something unfairly by disapproving of them
3. \_\_\_\_\_ (n, paragraph 2): a good reason or explanation for something
4. \_\_\_\_\_ (v, paragraph 2): preserve something in a form that ensures it will be protected and respected
5. \_\_\_\_\_ (adj., paragraph 3): confusing, often because you do not know how to find a solution
6. \_\_\_\_\_ (v, paragraph 5): support, defend, or fight for a person, belief, or right enthusiastically
7. \_\_\_\_\_ (n, paragraph 5): a decision that has already been made that can be used to inform decisions in the future

**Part B:** Scan the text quickly and match the headings with the correct paragraph.

- Attorney left saddened and confused by decision.
- Disability-selective abortions on the rise.
- Change in law would create new precedent.
- Court of Appeal challenge lost.
- Many difficulties for parents of children with disabilities.
- Judges explain their decision.



# Judges Uphold Law that Allows Abortions Up to the point of Birth

## Disability rights campaigner targets Supreme Court

1. \_\_\_\_\_

A woman with Down's syndrome has lost a Court of Appeal challenge over late-stage abortions of fetuses with certain health conditions. Heidi Crowter, who brought the case alongside Máire Lea-Wilson, whose son Aidan also has Down's syndrome, had argued that allowing pregnancy terminations up to birth if the fetus has the condition is discriminatory and stigmatizes disabled people. But in a ruling, three senior judges dismissed the appeal and said abortion laws were for parliament to decide.

2. \_\_\_\_\_

In a summary of the decision, by Lord Justice Underhill, Lady Justice Thirlwall, and Lord Justice Peter Jackson, the judges said the act did not interfere with the rights of the "living disabled". They said: "The court recognizes that many people with Down's syndrome and other disabilities will be upset and offended by the fact that a diagnosis of serious disability during pregnancy is treated by the law as a justification for termination, and that they may regard it as implying that their own lives are of lesser value. It holds that a perception of what the law implies is not by itself enough to give rise to an interference with Article 8 rights to private and family life, enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights."

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Paul Conrathe, the claimant's attorney, said: "This judgement is disappointing and perplexing. Rather than affirming the equal value of those with disabilities, it further adds to the stigmatization they suffer. This is for the simple reason that the court concluded that the perceptions of people with disabilities about a law which allows the ending of a life because of disability are irrelevant."

4. \_\_\_\_\_

Under the Abortion Act 1967, there is a 24-week time limit for abortions, unless "there is a

substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped". In these cases, abortion is legal up to the point of birth. The term "seriously handicapped" is open for interpretation, but has included having Down's syndrome, a cleft lip, or a club foot. There were 3,370 disability-selective abortions in 2021. The number of late-term abortions at 24 weeks gestation or over where the baby has a disability increased by 20% from 229 to 274. This increase is believed to have been affected by the cost-of-living crisis.

5. \_\_\_\_\_

Clare Murphy, chief executive of the British Pregnancy Advisory Service, BPAS, which provides abortion care services, said it supported the court's verdict. "There is no contradiction between a society which champions the rights of disabled people and one which allows women to make difficult decisions in heart-breaking situations," she said. "If successful, this case could have had far-reaching implications. The claimants have argued in court that fetuses should have human rights - this has never been decided in law and would go against many years of legal precedent in the UK."

6. \_\_\_\_\_

Emma Vogelmann, a disability rights activist who has spinal muscular atrophy, agreed. She said: "I have a condition that would have allowed my parents to terminate their pregnancy with me...I don't view it as a judgment on my life, and my quality of life, if someone were to terminate a pregnancy with my condition. Having a child is a huge responsibility anyway, and I think with a disability there are going to be a lot of extra fights that that parent is going to have. That really needs to be a consideration if a woman is able to commit to that if they're going to be able to give a child the best possible chance in life."

Sources: *The Guardian*, *BBC*



## 6 Reading comprehension

Complete the following sentences with one, two, or three words from the article.

1. Heidi Crowter lost a \_\_\_\_\_ challenge over late-stage abortions of fetuses with certain health conditions.
2. Miss Crowter believes that the law at present \_\_\_\_\_ disabled people.
3. Three senior judges \_\_\_\_\_ the appeal, saying that abortion laws were a parliamentary matter.
4. Lord Justice Underhill stated that \_\_\_\_\_ of the European Convention on Human Rights is not affected.
5. Under a 1967 Act of Parliament, abortion is legal up to the \_\_\_\_\_ of fetuses with significant disabilities.
6. The \_\_\_\_\_ crisis is believed to be one of the reasons late-term abortions have increased.
7. Clare Murphy strongly believes that giving fetuses human rights would create a new \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Emma Vogelmann does not believe that current legislation is a \_\_\_\_\_ on her life.

## 7 Talking point

In small groups, discuss the following questions.

1. Who do you think the present law is designed to protect?
2. Do you think religious leaders should be allowed to influence decisions about abortion? Do you think this happens in some countries?
3. Why can the creation of a new legal precedent be controversial?
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having certain legal matters enshrined in a constitution?



## 8 Optional extension/homework

Write an opinion essay on one of the topics below. Your essay should agree or disagree with the statement and contain at least five words from the new vocabulary in this lesson. Give examples to support your ideas.

statement 1

"Raising a child with a serious disability can be extremely difficult, so it is every mother's right to have an abortion, even if this occurs close to the birth."

statement 2

"Current legislation gives people who aren't disabled more rights than those who are, and is therefore discriminatory."

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