

Some U.S. legislators want to make sex-selective abortion (e.g., aborting because the fetus will grow into a girl) illegal. They would make these types of prenatal tests impermissible, and any doctor who performs an abortion for this reason could be prosecuted. Proponents believe that this legislation is needed because sex selection is a bad reason to seek abortion, and the state has an interest in curbing sexism. Opponents argue that, as long as abortion is legal, parents should not be interrogated for their reasoning. Would you support this legislation? If abortion can be morally permissible in some cases, is sex-selective abortion ever morally ok?



As Jenny lay on the obstetrician's examination table, she was grateful that the ultrasound tech had turned off the overhead screen. She didn't want to see the two shadows floating inside her. Since making her decision, she had tried hard not to think about them, though she could often think of little else. She was 45 and pregnant after six years of fertility bills, ovulation injections, donor eggs and disappointment — and yet here she was, 14 weeks into her pregnancy, choosing to extinguish one of two healthy fetuses, almost as if having half an abortion. But Jenny and her partner do not have the energy or resources to care for twins. As the doctor inserted the needle into Jenny's abdomen, aiming at one of the fetuses, Jenny tried not to flinch, caught between intense relief and intense guilt. Are reductive abortions morally permissible? Are there certain circumstances that would change your mind?



Kelley, then 29, agreed to become a surrogate mom for a couple in DC. When at five months of pregnancy an ultrasound revealed that the baby had a cleft lip and palate, a cyst in her brain, and serious heart defects, the couple wanted the pregnancy terminated and offered Kelley \$10,000 to terminate. Kelley believed that all efforts should be made to “give the baby a chance” and refused to terminate. Who do you think the “real” parents are of the fetus? What is the most virtuous course of action in this scenario? What factors are at play?



1. Are there moral limits to parental autonomy? In other words, are parents morally permitted to make any decision they want regarding their children, as long as they are not significantly harming them? What might count as a significant harm to a fetus or to a child?
2. Must parents do everything possible to maximize opportunities and benefits for their children? What sacrifices should we morally expect parents to make?
3. Does society or the government have a moral stake in how or why people reproduce? What are arguments on both sides?