

California Catholic Daily

[Return to Article] This printable article is taken from www.calatholic.com

Published: July 14, 2009

"Populations that we don't want to have too many of"

U.S. Supreme Court justice echoes views of Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger in published interview

New York City, N.Y., July 11, 2009 (CNA) -- U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has revealed in an interview that she was surprised at a 1980 court ruling that prevented the restoration of Medicaid funding for abortions, because, in her opinion, when *Roe v. Wade* was decided in 1973 "there was concern about population growth and particularly growth in populations that we don't want to have too many of."

In the interview, which ran in the Sunday, July 12, edition of the *New York Times Magazine*, Justice Ginsburg was first asked: "If you were a lawyer again, what would you want to accomplish as a future feminist agenda?" She responded, "Reproductive choice has to be straightened out. There will never be a woman of means without choice anymore. That just seems to me so obvious. The states that changed their abortion laws before *Roe* are not going to change back. So we have a policy that only affects poor women, and it can never be otherwise, and I don't know why this hasn't been said more often."



U.S. Supreme Court Justice
Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Asking her to clarify, the interviewer said: "Are you talking about the distances women have to travel because in parts of the country, abortion is essentially unavailable, because there are so few doctors and clinics that do the procedure? And also, the lack of Medicaid for abortions for poor women?" Justice Ginsburg admitted that the 1980 ruling, *Harris v. McRae*, which upheld the Hyde Amendment prohibiting Medicaid from being used to obtain abortions, surprised her. "Frankly I had thought that at the time *Roe* was decided, there was concern about population growth and particularly growth in populations that we don't want to have too many of."

Justice Ginsburg's view seems similar to that of Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger, a proponent of eugenics. In her 1915 pamphlet *What Every Boy and Girl Should Know*, Sanger wrote, "It is a vicious cycle; ignorance breeds poverty and poverty breeds ignorance. There is only one cure for both, and that is to stop breeding these things."

Ginsburg explained that she thought *Roe* would be "then set up for Medicaid funding for abortion. But when the court decided *McRae*, the case came out the other way. And then I realized that my perception of it had been altogether wrong."

In addition, Justice Ginsburg noted that she's "not a big fan" of restrictions on abortion. "It will be, it should be, that this is a woman's decision," she said. "It's entirely appropriate to say it has to be an informed decision, but that doesn't mean you can keep a woman overnight who has traveled a great distance to get to the clinic, so that she has to go to some motel and think it over for 24 hours or 48 hours."

Continued Justice Ginsburg, "I still think, although I was much too optimistic in the early days, that the possibility of stopping a pregnancy very early is significant. The morning-after pill will become more accessible and easier to take. So I think the side that wants to take the choice away from women and give it to the state, they're fighting a losing battle. Time is on the side of change."

To read the full text of the interview with Justice Ginsburg, [Click Here](#).

© California Catholic Daily 2009. All Rights Reserved.

Article URL: <http://www.calatholic.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?id=763944a9-24d0-40f5-a5be-58993126f6f8>