



The controversy began in October after Carleton Lifeline organized a debate on campus that challenged whether elective abortion should be legal in Canada.

“Abortion plan debated at Carleton”, Pauline Tam, *Ottawa Citizen*, Tuesday, November 28, 2006

Dear friends,

When I write, I want to let you know the fruits of our work. And when I got back from Ontario last month, I already had many stories to share of hearts and minds changed about abortion. But that was before I heard about what happened at Carleton University.



**Tracy Davidson (R) and
Jeannette Doucet (L)**

Lifeline, the pro-life students’ club on campus, had invited me to participate in an abortion debate in Ottawa. They managed to find two high-profile opponents: Tracy Davidson, the executive director of Planned Parenthood Ottawa, and Jeannette Doucet of Canadians for Choice. Both agreed we would debate the question, ‘Should elective abortion be made illegal?’¹ Almost two hundred people, including Carleton students, staff from Parliament Hill, and a reporter from a local radio station, attended the debate. According to most of the surveys we received from the debate, the vast majority of the audience believed that I won. In his survey, one pro-chooser wrote that the winner was “...probably the pro-life side. Debating skills and better preparation were apparent.”

Another survey respondent quoted me in his survey. In my concluding remarks, I challenged the audience to be seekers of the truth. I wanted them to test the arguments they heard and find out what’s true. In response, the student wrote that he was a seeker of the truth: **“I agree with Jose. If it is a human being, that changes the law.”** Another student on his way out of the debate told one of Lifeline students that the debate had changed his mind on abortion and that he was now pro-life.

One young mom came up to me and said, **“You know, I’m pro-choice but you are the first pro-life person to ever give me something to think about when it comes to abortion.”** Several others came up to me after the debate telling me that they were pro-choice but that a lot of my arguments made sense.

Three others told me that they had always been against abortion but the debate was the first time they understood why the pro-life side was true. A good friend told me that she always knew that abortion was wrong but only after hearing the debate did she know why.

¹ For more info, please check my friend Scott’s excellent synopsis of the debate:
<http://mccclare.blogspot.com/2006/10/debate-should-elective-abortion-be.html>

In other words, the debate accomplished what we wanted: pro-lifers were motivated, pro-choicers were challenged, and the undecided became pro-life. And this was all before the Carleton University Students' Association (CUSA) stepped in.

Pro-choice students from Carleton's Womyn's Centre were so upset at the debate that they complained to CUSA. They accused us of intimidating them and harassing them with abortion pictures. They also argued that, because pro-lifers advocated for the legal protection of the unborn, our views endangered the lives of women. Thus they convinced CUSA to change their constitution to become officially pro-choice. It now reads that, "*CUSA further affirms that actions such as campaigns, distributions, solicitations, lobbying efforts, displays, events, etc. that seek to limit or remove a woman's options in the event of pregnancy will not be supported.*" This means Lifeline will likely not be recognized as an official club at Carleton. In turn, they would not get funding or be allowed to advertise in many places on campus, and not be considered part of the CUSA community—this despite the fact that Lifeline members, as Carleton students, are forced to join CUSA.²



Debate at the CUSA meeting in December

But the story doesn't end there. The media picked up on CUSA's decision to ban their club because of our abortion debate. Reporters from the *National Post*, the *Edmonton Journal* and the CBC contacted Lifeline and spread the news across the country. Lifeline president Sarah Fletcher was even contacted by the *Washington Post* in Washington, DC, about what CUSA did. Editorials in the newspapers condemned CUSA; radio reporters pointed out the student association's hypocrisy; and pro-lifers like Sarah were invited to share the pro-life view to thousands more. For example, she was featured on a three-hour phone-in show on a local radio station. As Barbara McAdorey from Physicians for Life said in an e-mail, CUSA's actions have allowed pro-lifers to share their message beyond the school:



The amount of publicity the censorship of the pro-life voice on university campuses has received this past week by the mainstream media is phenomenal. It has given pro-lifers the opportunity to let Canadians know what we are really all about... It is ironic that in their attempts to stifle debate on university campuses, CUSA seems to have achieved just the opposite.

In January, I'll update you about what's happening at Carleton and will be sharing some other stories from my trip to Ontario. If you are concerned about what happened to Lifeline, please contact me for more info. Thank you for being part of this ministry, particularly those of you who helped organize the events that I spoke at in Ontario. Your continued support means that we can create more opportunities to share the pro-life message.

Sincerely,

Jojo Ruba

² Thanks to <http://deborahgyapong.blogspot.com/2006/12/fetus-is-comparable-to-parasite.html> for the CUSA meeting pictures.

Please make cheques payable to CCBP, write Jose Ruba on the note, and mail them to
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