

## Tennesseans for Choice questionnaire responses of U.S. Senator Fred Thompson

**1. Do you favor legislation that would further restrict access to abortion?**

I believe states should have the right to restrict abortion as they see fit.

**Do you favor [federal] legislation criminalizing abortion?**

No.

**2. Under what circumstances should abortion be legal?**

- woman or girl's life threatened by pregnancy.
- woman or girl's health seriously threatened by pregnancy
- pregnancy due to rape or incest.
- seriously defective fetus.
- woman or family unable to support another child.
- conditions as limited and regulated by Roe vs. Wade decision.
- woman herself decides.
- never.

**3a. Under what circumstances should public monies be used to pay for an abortion for an indigent family?**

- woman's or girl's life threatened by pregnancy.
- woman's or girl's health seriously threatened by pregnancy.
- pregnancy due to rape or incest.
- seriously defective fetus.
- woman or family unable to support another child.
- informed request of the woman.
- conditions as limited and regulated by Roe vs. Wade decision.
- never.

**3b. Would you support legislation to provide and expand Medicaid prenatal care and birthing facilities for indigent and/or rural women?**

I believe states should certainly be free to offer or expand this type of coverage to their citizens. I support allowing the states to create their own innovative Medicaid programs such as TennCare, which may choose to provide expanded prenatal care and birthing facilities to indigent women.

**3c. In order to minimize unplanned pregnancy, I support**

- family planning services for indigent women
- family planning services for teenagers
- better access to family planning services for all
- sex education programs in the schools
- other: I have voted to provide funding for Title X family planning programs

**4a. Do you think minors should be required to obtain parental consent before having an abortion?**

States should have the right to impose this restriction.

**4b. If yes, should consent of both parents be required when both do not reside in the home? When the father has been abusive/incestuous?**

**5. As an elected legislator my votes on abortion issues would reflect**

- my personal religious views.
- views of the majority of my constituents.
- my evaluation of the state's legitimate interest.
- other: my evaluation of the federal government's legitimate role.

**6a. Teen pregnancy rates continue to climb in Tennessee and elsewhere, primarily out of wedlock. As an elected legislator, how would you propose to deal with this difficult social problem and its demands on public funds?**

Teen pregnancy is undoubtedly a serious issue in Tennessee and across the nation. In my view, families and communities and churches and other local organizations can still have the most powerful positive influences on our nation's young people, and I believe these groups should continue to take steps that will prevent many teen pregnancies from occurring in the first place. When problems do occur, these groups, along with local and state governments, should stand ready to assist those in need.

From a federal perspective, I am encouraged that the welfare bill recently enacted into law includes a provision denying cash aid to unmarried mothers under age 18 and their children unless they live with an adult relative or in an adult-supervised arrangement. The law also requires states to provide or assist unwed minor mothers in finding a suitable home, maternity home, or other appropriate adult-supervised living arrangement. If the mother has not completed high school, the law requires her to attend school or an approved alternate training program once her youngest child is 12 weeks old.

- 6b. **Would you support funding for centers to help pregnant school children remain in school?**
7. **Should Congress/legislature be setting standards that limit medical procedures deemed necessary by physicians?**

I recently supported legislation that would prohibit health insurance companies from forcing mothers and their newborn children out of the hospital after as little as 24 hours. I do not believe that insurance companies should have the power to overrule a physician's determination of what medical treatment is necessary for a woman after she gives birth. Decisions about when a new mother goes home from the hospital should be made by a doctor and the mother, not by an insurance company employee.

8. **Please summarize your personal philosophy on the issue of reproductive choice**

The Supreme Court has attempted to delineate the constitutionally appropriate roles for individual and governmental decision-making on the issue of abortion. Beyond that, I believe that the federal government should not interfere with individual convictions and actions in this area.

I would make an exception to this general rule of governmental non-interference in a very limited number of cases where government has a compelling interest in promoting the public welfare. For instance, I believe that states should be allowed to impose various restrictions (i.e. parental notification, 24-hour waiting periods, etc.) if they so choose.