

# Cover Sheet

## Roe v Wade and Constitutional Fetal Personhood

*By Philip Rafferty*  
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**Biography.** Philip Rafferty is a retired criminal defense attorney, who had a private practice in Southern California. His books: (baseline work) Roe v. Wade: The Birth of a Constitutional Right, Philip A. Rafferty (1992), 774 pages, Roe v. Wade: Unraveling the Fabric of America, Philip A. Rafferty (2012), 236 pages, and A Silver Bullet for Roe v Wade Revised II (2016), 29 pages, and other related articles and books by Mr. Rafferty on abortion and constitutional law can be read online for free at [www.parafferty.com](http://www.parafferty.com). Silver Bullet is available for sale online from Amazon and Barnes & Noble. Other articles of interest on the website by Mr. Rafferty are Roe V. Wade: A Scandal Upon the Court, RJLR No. 7.1.1 (2005) (see [www.lawandreligion.com](http://www.lawandreligion.com) , vol 7, part 1, Fall 2005), and The Unborn Child as a Constitutional Person, talk given to the University Faculty for Life (UFFL), Twenty-Third Annual Conference, 06/01/2013.

### **Related articles recently published by others in First Things magazine.**

2021/04/01 Abortion is Unconstitutional, by John Finnis

2021/04/08 Doubts About Constitutional Personhood, by Edward Whelan

2021/04/09 Born and Unborn: Answering Objections to Constitutional Personhood, by John Finnis

2021/05/08 Dobbs to be Decided, by Gerard V. Bradley

2021/06/01 Personhood, Letter by Mary Ziegler

**Importance.** I believe this paper will be a complimentary, timely help in the effort to reverse Roe v Wade. The US Supreme Court has recently agreed to hear a challenge to Mississippi's 15-week ban on abortion, in Dobbs v Jackson Women's Health Organization.

**Thesis.** I argue, on Roe v Wade's own grounds, that the human fetus is an (English common law based) Constitutional person. The Court in Roe v Wade, 410 U.S. 113 (1973) specifically states that if the fetus is a constitutional person, then the right to an abortion necessarily collapses (id. at 156-57). Roe and its progeny say that the human fetus does not qualify as a due process clause person. I demonstrate, through over 180 prosecuted abortion cases, from primary sources, at the English common law from the 19<sup>th</sup> century going back as far as the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and a slew of important associated legal and medical articles and major reference works during the same time that the Roe justices certainly got this wrong. These English common law cases and other major works clearly recognize the human fetus as a human person, fully protected by the law. The court in Roe was mis-led that a woman had a liberty to abort under English common law. The exact opposite is true.

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I have been ill and am convalescing in 2021. I was aided in finalizing this article by Stephen Price, who edited my last two books, and who will monitor my email, if needed. Mr. Price can also be contacted:

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**Slightly more Biography:** I began research on the prosecution of abortion under English common law in 1974 right after the Roe v Wade decision in 1973. I quickly realized that there was something horribly wrong with the legal history presented to the court. I was able to locate references to the majority of 180 cases myself in various research libraries, and then locate the original documents. While producing the baseline 2-volume work published in 1992 I consulted with about three dozen eminent lawyers, professors and archivists listed in the acknowledgements to the book. I hired, and traveled to England to meet, Sir John H. Baker, retired Professor of English Legal History, University of Cambridge, former Downing Professor of the Laws of England, and Fellow of Saint Catharine's College, who, over an eight-year period, answered my countless questions, provided background and critical commentary, and in many instances located and translated original case documents. The final analysis, significance, conclusions, and arguments presented in the baseline 1992 work, based on these original case documents and important associated legal and medical articles and major reference works during the same time frame, and in my three subsequent books and articles, are my own.