

## A Democratic Record of Accomplishment in Decreasing Abortion

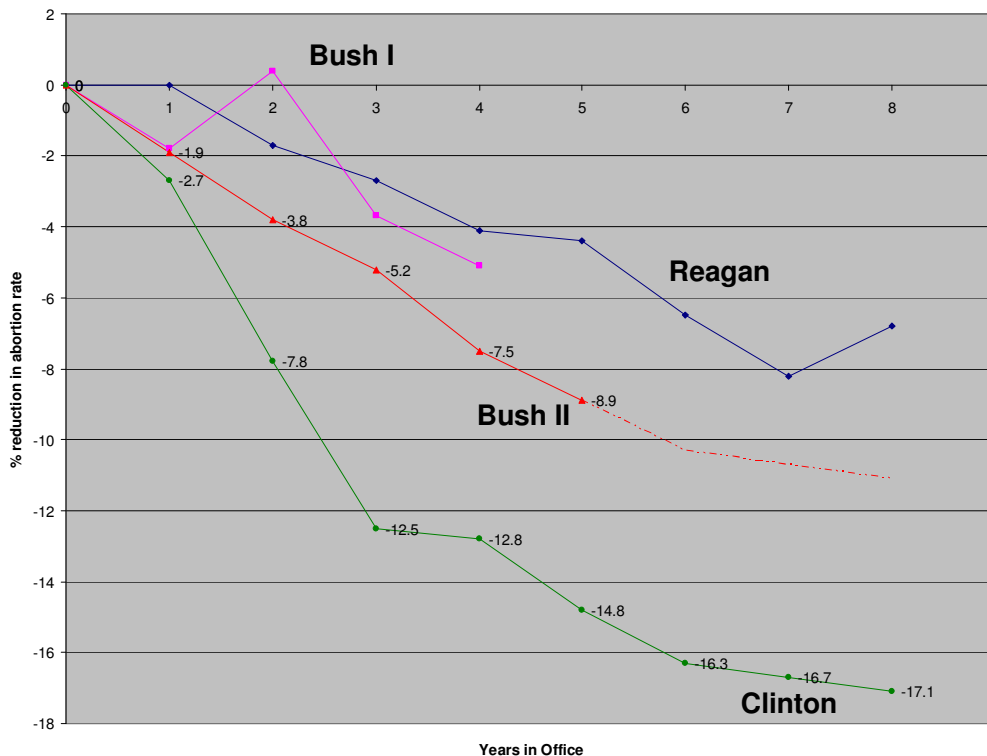
This presidential campaign has been marked by some extreme language directed toward the Democrats on the subject of abortion. Conservative pundits, McCain surrogates, and even a number of bishops have used apocalyptic invective to portray the Democratic candidates as being likely to spur an increase in the number of abortions.

But the *Catholic Democrats*, like the Obama Campaign and several prominent Catholic intellectuals (eg. Doug Kmiec, Thomas Groome and Nick Cafardi), have pointed to data that demonstrates substantial success during the Clinton Administration in decreasing abortions across the U.S. The graph below is a unique compilation of the Guttmacher Institute annual data from all 50 states under each of the last four administrations. Focusing on the abortion rate (number of abortions per 1000 females aged 15-44), each curve shows the fall in the abortion rate as normalized to the rate at the beginning of each administration (ie. 1980 for Reagan, 1988 for Bush Sr., 1992 for Clinton and 2000 for George W. Bush).

Following the Supreme Court decisions in 1973, the number of legal abortions rose rapidly during the Ford and Carter Administrations, as the number of illegal abortions fell. The total number continued to climb throughout the Reagan Administration and peaked in 1990 under President Bush, at 1.61 million per year. But accounting for changes in population, the rate itself began to decline starting in 1982.

**The clear conclusion is that the Democrats have a record of accomplishment when it comes to abortion, as demonstrated by the significantly steeper decline under President Clinton compared with the two Presidents Bush or President Reagan.** Senators Obama and Biden have publicly committed themselves to advance abortion reduction measures in a new Administration, and the *Catholic Democrats* support this approach as the most moral and effective way to solve the abortion problem.

Annual reduction in abortion rate under four presidencies



Jones RK *et al.* Abortion in the United States: Incidence and Access to Services, 2005. Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, 2008, 40(1):6-16