



NARAL
Pro-Choice America

Former Gov. Mitt Romney (R-MA)

Former Gov. Mitt Romney served as governor of Massachusetts from January 2003 to January 2007. During that time, Gov. Romney's self-described position on abortion and other reproductive-rights issues shifted from pro-choice to anti-choice.¹

A description of Gov. Romney's actions on choice-related issues and a selection of his public statements on reproductive-health issues follow.

Promoting the Right to Choose in Massachusetts



Vetoed a measure that would have increased access to emergency contraception by permitting pharmacists to dispense the medication without a prescription and ensuring that sexual-assault survivors receive information about and timely access to the drug.² The Massachusetts state legislature voted to override Gov. Romney's veto.³



From 1998 until 2006, Massachusetts used "abstinence-only" funds for public service announcements, not for classroom courses.⁴ During his last year in office, Romney directed these dollars to schools in predominately African-American and Latino communities, marking a stark change in state policy. After Gov. Romney left office, the new administration decided not to apply for the funds at all.⁵



Signed into law a measure that required Massachusetts to apply for a federal Medicaid family-planning waiver to expand services to more low-income women and families.⁶

In His Own Words

- While running for governor in 2002, Romney stated on a NARAL Pro-Choice Massachusetts survey: "I respect and will protect a women's right to choose. This choice is a deeply personal one. Women should be free to choose based on their own beliefs, not mine and not the governments."⁷
- During an unsuccessful senatorial bid in 1994, Romney said: "I believe that abortion should be safe and legal in this country. I have since the time that my mom took that position when she ran in 1970 as a U.S. Senate candidate. I believe that since *Roe v. Wade* has been the law for 20 years we should sustain and support it."⁸

- More than a decade later, after being elected as a “pro-choice” governor, Romney said: “And it struck me very powerfully at that point, that the *Roe v. Wade* approach has so cheapened the value of human life that someone could think it’s not a moral issue to destroy embryos that have been created solely for the purpose of research, and I said to my chief of staff, ... ‘I want to make it very clear that I’m pro-life.’”⁹
- When asked during his 1994 senatorial campaign about his position on emergency contraception (also known as the “morning-after” pill), Romney said: “I don’t really understand how it works or when it works but my understanding is that it is an effective morning-after pill and I think it would be a positive thing to have women have the choice of taking morning-after pills.... I would favor having it available.”¹⁰
- Nine years later, when as governor he vetoed legislation to expand access to this safe, effective form of back-up birth control, Romney said: “I saw where the harsh logic of abortion can lead – to the view of innocent life as nothing more than research material or a commodity to be exploited.”¹¹
- During his 2002 campaign for governor, Romney responded “yes” on a NARAL Pro-Choice Massachusetts survey to this question: “Do you support comprehensive, age-appropriate family life/sexuality education in the public schools, and oppose ‘abstinence-only’ sexuality programs?” Yet, in 2005, Gov. Romney reversed his position and, for the first time, committed Massachusetts to use federal funds to provide “abstinence-only” programs for 12- to 14-year-olds in primarily African-American and Latino communities.¹²
- While running for the Republican nomination for president, Romney has made the following statements on choice:
 - “I am pro-life. I believe that abortion is the wrong choice except in cases of incest, rape, and to save the life of the mother.”¹³
 - “I am pro-life and I support pro-life legislation.... I think the *Roe v. Wade* one-size-fits-all approach is wrong.”¹⁴
 - When asked if the repeal of *Roe v. Wade* would be a good day for America, Romney responded, “Absolutely.”¹⁵

Notes:

- ¹ Scott Helman, *Romney's Journey to the Right: Social Issue Stands Hardened Since '02*, BOSTON GLOBE, Dec. 17, 2006.
- ² S.B. 2073, 184th Gen. Ct., Reg. Sess. (Mass. 2005).
- ³ Scott S. Greenberger, *Lawmakers Override Governor's Contraception Veto: Move Will Ease Morning-After Pill's Availability*, BOSTON GLOBE, Sept. 16, 2005.
- ⁴ Lisa Wangsness, *Patrick Seeks to Forgo Grant, End Classes on Sex Abstinence: But Leaders in House Back Funding*, BOSTON GLOBE, Apr. 24, 2007; Scott Helman, *State to Push Abstinence in Schools: Romney to Use U.S. Grant; Other Sex-Ed Will Stay*, BOSTON GLOBE, Dec. 21, 2005
- ⁵ Lisa Wangsness, *Patrick Seeks to Forgo Grant, End Classes on Sex Abstinence: But Leaders in House Back Funding*, BOSTON GLOBE, Apr. 24, 2007; Scott Helman, *State to Push Abstinence in Schools: Romney to Use U.S. Grant; Other Sex-Ed Will Stay*, BOSTON GLOBE, Dec. 21, 2005. _
- ⁶ H.B. 4178, 184th Gen. Ct., Reg. Sess. (Mass. 2005).
- ⁷ Scott Helman, *Romney's Journey to the Right*, BOSTON GLOBE, Dec. 17, 2006.
- ⁸ *On Jobs and Wages; The Kennedy-Romney Debates/Debate Excerpts*, BOSTON GLOBE, Oct. 26, 1994, at 23.
- ⁹ Glen Johnson, *On Abortion, Romney's Views First Shaped by Personal, then Clinical*, ASSOC. PRESS, Feb. 7, 2007.
- ¹⁰ Andrew Miga, *Romney Leans Toward Abort Rights Camp*, BOSTON HERALD, May 19, 1994, at 30.
- ¹¹ Mitt Romney, *Why I Vetoed Contraception Bill*, BOSTON GLOBE, July 26, 2005.
- ¹² Scott Helman, *Romney's Journey to the Right*, BOSTON GLOBE, Dec. 17, 2006.
- ¹³ Mitt Romney, *Why I Vetoed The Contraception Bill*, BOSTON GLOBE, July 26, 2005.
- ¹⁴ Meg Kinnard, *Romney Sidesteps Question on Abortion-Ultrasound Plan*, ASSOC. PRESS, Apr. 14, 2007.
- ¹⁵ Transcript of GOP Presidential Debate in California, MSNBC, May 3, 2007.