



## Prude Or Prudent?

BY KATHLEEN PARKER

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WASHINGTON — They lost me at the word “women.” As so often happens with contemporary debate, arguments being proffered in support of allowing teenagers as young as 15 (and possibly younger) to buy the “morning-after pill” without adult supervision are false on their premise.

Here’s an experiment to demonstrate. Question 1: Do you think that women should have access to Plan B, also known as the morning-after pill, to be used at their own discretion? Yes!

Question 2: Do you think that girls as young as 11 or 12 should be able to buy the morning-after pill without any adult supervision? Didn’t think so.

Question 3: If you answered yes to Question 2, are you a parent? Didn’t think so. Perhaps a few parents answered yes to Question 3, but I suspect not many. Yet, repeatedly in the past several days, we’ve heard the argument that any interference with the over-the-counter sale of Plan B to any female of any age is blocking a woman’s right to self-determination. Fifteen-year-olds, where the limit is currently set, are girls, not women. And female parts do not a woman make any more than a correspondingly developed male makes the proud possessor a man.

The debate arose after a federal judge last month ordered that the government remove all obstacles to over-the-counter sales of Plan B. As it stands, children as young as 15 can buy the drug without a prescription or parental knowledge. They do have to show identification proving they are 15, which, as critics of such restrictions have pointed out, is problematic for many teens.

Apparently the Obama administration agrees that young girls shouldn’t use so serious a drug, even though proclaimed medically “safe,” without adult supervision. The Justice Department has given notice that it will appeal the judge’s decision, a move that could potentially backfire and, in fact, remove all age barriers.

The dominant question is legitimate: Even if we would prefer that girls not be sexually active so early in life, wouldn’t we rather they block a pregnancy before it happens than wait and face the worse prospect of abortion?

The pros are obvious: Plan B, if taken within three days of unprotected sex, greatly reduces the chance of pregnancy. If a child waits too long to take the pill, however, a

fertilized egg could reach the uterine wall and become implanted, after which the drug is useless.

You see how the word “child” keeps getting in the way. There’s no point debating whether such young girls should be sexually active. Obviously, given the potential consequences, both physical and psychological, the answer is no. Just as obvious, our culture says quite the opposite: As long as there’s an exit, whether abortion or Plan B, what’s the incentive to await mere maturity?

Advocates for lifting age limits on Plan B, including Planned Parenthood president Cecile Richards, insist that the pill is universally safe and, therefore, all age barriers should be dropped. From a strictly utilitarian viewpoint, this may be well-advised. But is science the only determining factor when it comes to the well-being of our children? Even President Obama, who once boasted that his policies would be based on science and not emotion, has parental qualms about children buying serious drugs to treat a condition that has deeply psychological underpinnings.

What about the right of parents to protect their children? A 15-year-old can’t get Tylenol at school without parental permission, but we have no hesitation about children taking a far more serious drug without oversight?

These are fair questions that deserve more than passing scrutiny — or indictments of prudishness. A Slate headline about the controversy goes: “The Politics of Prude.” More to the point: The slippery slope away from parental autonomy is no paranoid delusion. Whatever parents may do to try to delay the ruin of childhood innocence, the culture says otherwise: Have sex, take a pill, don’t tell mom.

Where, finally, do we draw the increasingly blurred line for childhood?

Americans may disagree about what is sexually appropriate for their children. And everyone surely wishes to prevent children from having babies. But public policy should be aimed at involving rather than marginalizing parents.

To say that this controversy is strictly political is no argument against debate. Politics is the debate about the role of government in our lives. And the debate about Plan B is fundamentally about whether government or parents have ultimate authority over their children’s well-being.

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Kathleen PARKER

## Jason Collins Is No Jackie Robinson

BY CHRISTINE FLOWERS

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The cartoon that was widely disseminated this week depicting Jackie Robinson hugging Jason Collins completely distorts the significance of Robinson’s legacy and Collins’ act.

We’re all aware of the social juggernaut that is the gay rights movement. Anyone who refuses to stand up (or come out) and support same-sex marriage, public funding for gender reassignment operations, punitive actions against the Boy Scouts and the inclusion of gay-friendly provisions in immigration legislation is a bigot. Just ask, well, everyone who has ever appeared on MSNBC or written a screed at Huffington Post.

But just because society is allegedly evolving to the point where everyone whose knuckles don’t scrape the ground think gender distinctions are irrelevant and Heather deserves two (or more) daddies, this does not mean that we can twist history to our liking. While it took some courage to admit to the world that he was sexually attracted to men, Jason Collins is no more or less a hero than Tim Tebow who took a few shots because he believed in God and wasn’t afraid to pray in public.

Jackie Robinson is another story altogether. Anyone who has seen the recent biopic “42” has some idea of what the great Dodger was forced to endure as the man who single-handedly integrated American’s national pastime. As a Philadelphian who was not fully aware of the treatment he received at the hands of our hometown club, I was horrified to hear the words that, in other times, were launched as easily and expertly as a flyball out of Shibe Park.

And of course, it wasn’t just words. Robinson was a social pariah among his own teammates, unable to ride on the same buses or lodge in the same hotels as his less-talented colleagues. Beyond the world of baseball, he would not have been able to walk down a southern street without having to worry about his personal safety. He was a black man at a time when the color of your skin put you at risk for harassment, or much worse. He couldn’t hide it, and no one really cared about the content of his character.

Regardless of how much we try and analogize his ordeal to that of Jason Collins, it doesn’t compute. While there is no question that being gay in professional sports is not an idyllic experience, it is hardly the purgatory that Jackie Robinson suffered every day of his major league life. This is particularly so in the 21st century where a guy like Tebow is

more likely to be ridiculed for his genuflections than a sexually emancipated athlete who has the support of presidents and movie stars. I don’t remember anyone coming to the defense of Tebow when his prayers were obviously not being answered from on high. God is clearly not a Jets fan. I do, however, remember the late night crowd making fun of the Heisman winner.

No one would dare treat Collins with anything other than respect, even in the sweaty locker rooms which are the temple of his own faith. We have speech codes, explicit or implicit, that forbid us from using the word “gay” in a pejorative manner. We have laws that forbid us from asking about a person’s sexual orientation, or firing a teacher at a Catholic school no less who is openly living with her “partner.” This is a society that has become increasingly gay-friendly, and while that is a good thing from a compassionate perspective, it hardly supports the view that coming out on the gridiron or ice rink or basketball court is an act of courage.

But it plays into the narrative that we are forced to read, the one where only preferred minorities are courageous while others are either forgotten or ridiculed. If I were an African American watching the Collins affair, I’d be annoyed beyond belief at the suggestion that what my ancestors suffered was equal to the deprivation of “marriage equality.”

And they’re not the only ones. I’m personally outraged that the LGBT lobby is ready to sink immigration reform by its insistence on pushing for “same-sex” visas for foreign born partners, fully aware that this will guarantee a veto on the whole bill from conservative legislators who are already gun shy about helping “illegals.”

There is nothing wrong with supporting human dignity. It is the basis for our secular democratic prayer “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

But we do ourselves a great disservice when we try and equalize all struggles and histories simply because it fits our evolving sense of who we should be.

Jason Collins is, indeed, a brave man. But he’s no Jackie Robinson.

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temple as displayed in strip clubs. Human dignity and decorum demands better of us. Whatever we have or lack at any point in our lives — we always have our values. And this is primarily what we pass on to our children.

Show some class Yankton, and some respect for women and ourselves! Get rid of stripper bars. And suggest to cable TV providers that smut and porn channels aren’t welcome here either. If people need an outlet for their energies, I recommend the Memorial Park soccer fields. Usually the park is filled with kids and parents enjoying themselves immensely, thanks to the organizers of Yankton youth soccer and other family activities.

Everything we do is an example to our kids; and they are willing and eager followers. Let’s give them the best examples we can, not the worst.

## THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

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OPINION | OUR VIEW

## There Are No Good Options In Syria

There are no good choices in Syria. That is the blunt reality confronting the United States today as it considers what to do — and how to do it — in regards to the deadly Syrian civil war, in which an estimated 70,000 people have been killed during two years of fighting.

This struggle between rebels and the forces of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has grown more alarming and disturbing in recent months. There were fresh reports last week that the nerve gas sarin may have been used, thus crossing the so-called “red line” defined by President Obama. There are now reports of at least two Israeli airstrikes in Syria late last week, with one of them allegedly aimed at an arms shipment, possibly with Iranian ties, that is believed to have been intended for Hezbollah, an Israeli foe based in Lebanon. War talk now fills the nervous Mediterranean air.

Where all this goes next is unclear. President Obama faces tough choices amid the hard reality that firm rhetoric and basic international will cannot necessarily undo the twisted knots of conflicts like Syria. Any action or inaction could have major repercussions across the Middle East.

Syria is a particularly challenging dilemma. The current secular leadership comprises a murderous regime, aligned with Iran and Russia, whose actions challenge international law. However, the opposition forces who have seemingly won the hearts of some in the west are dominated by extremists with ties to al-Qaida, according to an online article in *The Economist*.

The facts of this case take us back the words of former South Dakota Sen. James Abourezk when he spoke in Vermillion last January. He said al-Assad’s government, despite having blood on its hands and dubious international alliances, “is the most progressive government you’ll ever get in Syria.” He added, “It’s a dictatorship, but they’re not making anything better. In fact, if the rebels take over, it’s going to be worse. Much worse.”

This casts the U.S. in a bad spot, and Israel’s recent actions don’t help matters.

Thus, the options are far from attractive. There are calls to arm the rebels, but as noted in *The Economist*, the rebels already have lucrative backers in their corner hailing from other parts of the Persian Gulf. Also, the prospect of giving weapons to jihadists has a terrifying blowback potential for the U.S. and its partners.

Employing airstrikes is another option, but as we’ve seen in Afghanistan and Pakistan, this carries major collateral risks.

Creating a no-fly zone could also weaken the al-Assad government without boosting the rebels, but recent history has suggested that these no-fly zones are often preludes to deeper involvement.

Sending in troops is seen in all corners as a last resort. But it can never be ruled out without undercutting the weight carried by other options on the board.

Once again, we see that the world is not a simple place. It is not a realm that will kneel down before soaring rhetoric, just as it won’t relent in the face of forceful intervention. The next step must be weighed with grave concern, for we’re dancing around a powderkeg and our decisions could be a disastrous spark.

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### ONLINE OPINION

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the *Press & Dakotan’s* Web site are as follows:

#### LATEST RESULTS:

Do you approve of the job performance of the Yankton City Commission?	
No	61%
Yes	22%
Not sure	17%
<b>TOTAL VOTES CAST</b>	<b>249</b>

*The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.*

#### CURRENT QUESTION:

Do you approve of the job performance of the Yankton County Commission?  
To vote in the *Press & Dakotan’s* Internet poll, log on to our website at [www.yankton.net](http://www.yankton.net).

### TODAY IN HISTORY

#### By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, May 7, the 127th day of 2013. There are 238 days left in the year.

**Today’s Highlight in History:** On May 7, 1763, Pontiac, chief of the Ottawa Indians, attempted to lead a sneak attack on British-held Fort Detroit, but was foiled because the British had been tipped off in advance. (The Ottawa Indians and other tribes then launched an all-out war with the British that came to be known as Pontiac’s War.)

**On this date:** In 1789, the first inaugural ball was held in New York in honor of President George Washington and his wife, Martha.

In 1824, Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125, had its premiere in Vienna.

In 1825, composer Antonio Salieri died in Vienna, Austria.

In 1833, composer Johannes Brahms was born in Hamburg, Germany.

In 1840, composer Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky was born in Volkovsk, Russia.

In 1915, nearly 1,200 people died when a German torpedo sank the British liner RMS Lusitania off the Irish coast.

In 1942, U.S. Army Gen. Jonathan Wainwright went on a Manila radio station to announce the Allied surrender of the Philippines to Japanese forces during World War II.

In 1945, Germany signed an unconditional surrender at Allied headquarters in Rheims (Rams), France, ending its role in World War II.

In 1954, the 55-day Battle of Dien Bien Phu in Vietnam ended with Vietnamese insurgents overrunning French forces.

In 1963, the United States launched the Telstar 2 communications satellite.

In 1975, President Gerald R. Ford formally declared an end to the “Vietnam era.” In Ho Chi Minh City — formerly Saigon — the Viet Cong celebrated its takeover.

In 1992, the latest addition to America’s space shuttle fleet, Endeavour, went on its first flight. A 203-year-old proposed constitutional amendment barring Congress from giving itself a midterm pay raise received enough votes for ratification as Michigan became the 38th state to approve it.

**Ten years ago:** President George W. Bush ordered the lifting of sanctions against Iraq, and called on members of the U.N. Security Council to do the same. The White House announced President Bush had chosen New Mexico oilman Colin R. McMillan to be secretary of the Navy and Air Force Secretary James Roche to replace the dismissed secretary of the Army, Thomas White. (However, McMillan died in an apparent suicide in July 2003, while Roche’s nomination languished in Congress before being withdrawn in March 2004.)

**Five years ago:** President George W. Bush, addressing the Council of Americas, said Cuba’s post-Fidel Castro leadership had made only “empty gestures at reform” as he rejected calls for easing U.S. restrictions on the communist island. Dmitry Medvedev was sworn in as Russia’s president.

**One year ago:** Education Secretary Arne Duncan broke ranks with the White House, stating his unequivocal support for same-sex marriage one day after Vice President Joe Biden suggested on NBC that he supported gay marriage as well. Vladimir Putin took the oath of office as Russia’s president in a brief but regal Kremlin ceremony.

**Today’s Birthdays:** Former Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., is 81. Singer Jimmy Ruffin is 74. Actress Robin Strasser is 68. Singer-songwriter Bill Danoff is 67. Rhythm-and-blues singer Thelma Houston is 67. Rock musician Bill Kreutzmann (Grateful Dead) is 67. Rock musician Prairie Prince is 63. Movie writer-director Amy Heckerling is 61. Actor Michael E. Knight is 54. Rock musician Phil Campbell (Motorhead) is 52. Country musician Rick Schell is 50. Rock singer-musician Chris O’Connor (Primitive Radio Gods) is 48. Actress Traci Lords is 45. Singer Eagle-Eye Cherry is 42. Actor Breckin Meyer is 39. Rock musician Matt Helders (Arctic Monkeys) is 27. Actor Taylor Abrahamse is 22.

**Thought for Today:** “We all live in suspense, from day to day, from hour to hour; in other words, we are the hero of our own story.” — Mary McCarthy, American author (1912-1989).

### FROM THE BIBLE

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come.” Revelation 1:8

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