

# Women's rights <sup>[1]</sup>

Hennessy's Index: A number is never just a number

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## AVAILABILITY

Available online <sup>[2]</sup>

### Excerpts:

189- The year parliament "criminalized the distribution and advertisement of contraceptives. Abortion became recognized as a crime punishable by life imprisonment and the use or sale of contraceptives became an indictable offence that was punishable by a two-year term in prison". (Source)

1969- The year Canada made exceptions to legal restrictions on abortion. Women had to make their case to a Therapeutic Abortion Committee comprised of three doctors. (Source 1, 2 p6)

1970- The year "a group of independent feminists organized a caravan that traveled across Canada to demand the legalization of abortion. ... Thirty-five women chained themselves to the parliamentary gallery in the House of Commons, closing parliament for the first time in Canadian history." (Source)

1975- The year Dr. Henry Morgentaler began serving an 18-month jail term for performing abortions. He was acquitted of the original charge in 1976 and waded into a long-term legal battle to secure women's legal right to safe abortions. (Source)

1988- The year the Supreme Court struck down Canada's abortion law as unconstitutional. Chief Justice Brian Dickson: "Forcing a woman, by threat of criminal sanction, to carry a fetus to term unless she meets certain criteria unrelated to her own priorities and aspirations, is a profound interference with a woman's body and thus a violation of her security of the person." (Source)

1989- The year the Supreme Court ruled that "a man has no legal right to veto a woman's abortion decision". (Source)

1990- The year Brian Mulroney's federal government passed a bill that would "sentence doctors to two years in jail for performing abortions where a woman's health is not at risk". The Senate struck it down. (Source)

1995- The year Diane Marleau, then Canada's federal health minister, deemed abortion a medically necessary procedure. (Source)

15.9- Percentage of Canadian hospitals that offer accessible abortion services - that's only one in every six hospitals in Canada. In PEI, women must leave the province to access a safe abortion. (Source 1 p1, 2)

203- Number of Canada's Members of Parliament who voted on September 26, 2012 to defeat Motion 312, a federal backbencher's private motion "that sought to re-examine how Canadian law defines a human being". It was defeated by a margin of 203-91. (Source)

87- Number of Conservative MPs who voted in support of Motion 312 - that's 53 per cent of the federal Conservative caucus. (Source)

74- Number of women MPs in Canada. Only seven of them voted in favour of Motion 312. (Source)

68,000- Number of women estimated to die every year from unsafe abortions around the world. Most (97 per cent) unsafe abortions occur in developing countries. "Legal abortion in developed countries is one of the safest procedures in contemporary practice, with case-fatality rates less than one death per 100,000 procedures." (Source p2)

61,506- Number of Canadians (and counting) who are sending messages through Leadnow.ca's campaign to "stop the covert attempt to criminalize abortion" through the introduction of Motion 312. (Source)

**Region:** Canada <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** gender <sup>[4]</sup>

**Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/12/10/womens-rights>

### Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/12/10/womens-rights> [2]

<http://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/commentary/abortion-and-womens-rights> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864> [4]

