



Jewish Tradition ‘Permits’ Abortion. If You Believe in Bodily Autonomy, That’s Not Enough.

Michal Raucher, Rutgers University-New Brunswick

Last week, Israeli Health Minister **Nitzan Horowitz** responded to the draft U.S. Supreme Court opinion that would overturn *Roe v. Wade*, “A woman’s rights over her own body are hers alone.”

It might seem odd that the Israeli health minister was commenting on American abortion law, but his response, contained in a tweet, addresses a theme common to the abortion discussion in Israel and America that I research as an ethicist and scholar of reproduction among Jews.

In the 1970s, the Israeli Knesset debated the legalization of abortion. After several years of discussions, it ultimately passed a law that permitted abortion in certain circumstances: 1) If a woman is younger than 17 or older than 40; 2) when pregnancy results from rape, incest or extra-marital relations; 3) under the possibility that the baby will be born with a physical or mental deformity; and 4) when the continuation of the pregnancy could endanger a woman’s life or mental health. This law allows for certain abortions to be performed until the 39th week of pregnancy.