

## Student Abstract

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**Title:** Personhood at Fertilization: At what Cost to SC Women?

**Abstract:** In response to the introduction of S1084, of South Carolina's S1084 General Bill, the "Unborn Victims of Violence Act of 2006" (UVVA), a legal review was conducted to determine the bills' impact on women's health. Physical assault rates increase with pregnancy; homicide is the leading cause of death for pregnant women. Federal and state laws such as UVVA (2003) and the 2002 revisions to the state child health insurance program, promoted as improving the livelihood of pregnant women, in actuality set the precedence to deny women their rights to privacy and bodily integrity through the establishment of legal personhood of a fertilized egg, embryo, or fetus which undermines the foundation for Roe v. Wade. These laws have also been used to prosecute women who suffered stillbirths under fetal homicide statutes. With UVVA, sentencing for harming a fetus is equal to that imposed for harming a woman, which deters from the issue of violence against women, ignores the relevance of the shared maternal-fetal relationship, as noted by a recent ACOG ethics panel recommendation, and disregards the importance of the woman as a patient/person in her own right. As SC looks to enact its UVVA law, amendments avoiding a separate status for a fetus should be considered. States such as North Carolina, New Mexico, and Maine have enacted laws with enhanced penalties for inflicting harm on a pregnant woman. These laws protect women's rights while still reflecting the harmful effect of pregnancy loss.