

MEMO Published June 21, 2024 • 6 minute read

RFK Jr. and Stein Are Helping the Red Team Instead of Protecting Abortion, IVF, & Reproductive Rights



Third Way,

Reproductive freedom is under attack, and not just from the anti-abortion right. Third-party presidential candidates Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and Jill Stein are choosing to exploit this moment, which could once again put Donald Trump back in the White House. Voters who are concerned about protecting access to reproductive care need to know that both candidates are siding with the Red Team, giving Trump and the anti-abortion right a pass and partnering with extremists on the issue.

In recent months, Kennedy has conflated the timelines of pregnancy, stated the government has a “claim” to unborn children, promoted abortion misinformation, and chosen a running mate who is best known for her war on IVF. And despite her medical background, Stein was silent when Trump’s

Supreme Court nominees overturned Roe v. Wade after helping to put him in office. Any voter that is worried about a second Trump presidency or cares about protecting women's rights should oppose RFK Jr. and Jill Stein in 2024.

RFK Jr. and his running mate champion far-right policies and conspiracy theories on abortion, IVF, and reproductive freedom...

Kennedy previously described himself as “pro-life.” Kennedy describes himself as “pro-life,” to reporters in 2005. (*Boston Globe*, March 15, 2005) He also discussed his view that “the proper moral stance is to always err towards life,” specifically saying “we should be consistent about that in all of our policies” including “in addressing abortion” in a separate media appearance that year. (*CNN Live Sunday*, March 27, 2005)

He backs a 15-week abortion ban: Since running for office, RFK Jr's most consistent position on abortion is his support for a 15-week abortion ban. He has repeatedly answered in the affirmative when asked about a 15-week ban. Responding to a question asking, “So you would cap [abortion] at 15 weeks?” RFK Jr. said, “Yes, yes, yes, for three months...Once the child is viable outside the womb, I think the state has an interest in protecting that child that supersedes...I think the states have a right to protect the child once it becomes viable.” (*NBC News*, August 14, 2023)

- **Check the clock:** Kennedy's most consistent position is his support for a 15-week ban, but he regularly conflates that period of time with “viability.” “While there was no ambiguity in Mr. Kennedy's declaration of support for a ban after three months, there were indications that he did not understand the timeline of pregnancy. By way of explaining his position, he said, ‘Once a child is viable outside the womb, I think then the state has an interest in protecting that child.’ But viability, which can vary from pregnancy to pregnancy, is generally around 24 weeks, or six months.” (*New York Times*, August 14, 2023)

He asserts a government has a “claim” to unborn children: Among Kennedy's most perplexing comments on abortion is his continued expression that the government has a “claim” to unborn children. “Now, I would say later on in the pregnancy, and the government has a much larger claim to after the first trimester, philosophically has a higher claim to protect that child when they're viable.” (*The Charlie Kirk Show/Real America's Voice*, December 16, 2023)

Kennedy would roll back abortion medication: RFK Jr. says he would re-evaluate abortion pills, saying, “I'm worried about every pharmaceutical drug...About the abortion pill, we ought to know what the side effects are, what the risks are, what the benefits and that everyone should have informed choice and we don't have that now.” (*Catholic News Agency*, April 26, 2024)

His ticket spreads abortion misinformation: “You educated me that 85% of abortions are with Black women. The abortion clinics are in the Black neighborhoods and the fertility clinics are in the white neighborhoods...The amount of money spent funneling women into that corral to get an abortion and the coercion that takes place that should not take place.” – Robert F. Kennedy Jr. (*Washington Post*, Feb. 23, 2024)

“You look at the abortion clinics—many of which are in low-income neighborhoods—and we're investing in those at a far higher rate than we're investing in ending the cycle of poverty in those neighborhoods, and you clearly see there's an issue here.” – Nicole Shanahan (*Daily Beast*, May 1, 2024)

His running mate attacks IVF: Kennedy’s running mate Nicole Shanahan has committed millions of dollars and her personal energy attacking IVF treatments for women: “She started that work through her ex-husband’s foundation, announcing a \$100 million commitment in 2019 to programs aimed at helping women become pregnant later in life ...However, Shanahan has advocated against supporting IVF research, because, in her view, it detracts from understanding the root causes of infertility. And she has argued the procedure is ‘sold irresponsibly’ and has become more of a ‘commercial endeavor’ than a scientific one, calling its promise ‘one of the biggest lies that’s being told about women’s health today.’” (*NBC News*, March 6, 2024)

Kennedy frequents anti-abortion centers: RFK Jr.’s senior advisor, Angela Stanton-King, was an anti-abortion activist who was pardoned by President Trump and still supports President Trump. RFK Jr. visited an Atlanta anti-abortion facility founded by Stanton-King, “which aims to persuade women to carry their pregnancies to term, [and] he has repeated her false and inflammatory claims that abortion providers systematically target Black women.” (*Washington Post*, April 22, 2024)

Jill Stein led to the overturning of *Roe v Wade* and gives cover to anti-abortion extremists...

Jill Stein has *never* criticized Trump or his MAGA Supreme Court picks for overturning *Roe v Wade*, but she attacks Biden for it while Trump brags about ending *Roe*: Stein says Biden is “holding our bodies hostage for political posturing...” and “Biden’s pledge to [codify *Roe*] disappeared.” (*Jill Stein*, May 3, 2022)

- Stein helped elect Donald Trump in 2016 and led to Trump handpicking three MAGA Supreme Court Justices who overturned *Roe v Wade*.

Stein was backed by an anti-choice, billionaire Trump donor: “In 2016, a billionaire backer of President Trump, Bernie Marcus, the co-founder of Home Depot, provided support to Jill Stein, the Green candidate, according to people with knowledge of the strategy, who said the effort was done

with the knowledge of some officials at the Trump campaign and its chairman at the time, Paul Manafort.” (*New York Times*, September 22, 2020)

Stein’s billionaire backer has given millions to support anti-choice Republicans: Bernie Marcus has given \$1 million to the RGA, which backed anti-abortion candidates like Governor Brian Kemp, “who signed a 2019 ‘heartbeat’ bill that bans abortions after about six weeks of pregnancy, one of the most restrictive anti-abortion laws in the country.” And backed “far-right Republican nominee for Pennsylvania governor Doug Mastriano, who had called banning abortion his ‘number one issue.’” (*More Perfect Union*, August 3, 2022)