

**Abstract of**  
**THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A “RIGHT” AND A “LIBERTY”**  
**AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS DIFFERENCE IN**  
**DEBATES OVER PUBLIC POLICY ON ABORTION AND EUTHANASIA**

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This article attempts to sort out “rights” language by identifying (1) the claimant to the right (A), (2) other persons (B), and a specific action ( $\phi$ ). It shows that if the action in question is an act on the part of the claimant to the right then the right at stake is in truth a “liberty” and not a right in the strict sense, whereas if the action specified is an act on the part of others then the right at stake is a right in the “strict sense.” Thus the claim of pregnant women to a right to abort their unborn children turns out to be a claim to a liberty because the act in question, to abort, is an act on the part of the pregnant women, whereas the claim that unborn children have a right to life is a claim to a right in the strict sense, because here the act in question is an act on the part of their mothers, this time, an act of forbearance, i.e., of forbearing killing them by aborting them. A similar analysis shows that the right to die claimed by those championing voluntary euthanasia is a claim to a right in the strict sense, because the action specified is required not of those claiming the right but of others, namely, to kill mercifully those freely choosing to be so killed.