

Slavery days

Letter to the editor, [Brunswick Beacon](#), 05.11.23

This year marks the Emancipation Proclamation's 160th anniversary. During this time, when MAGA Republicans in the state legislature have passed an oppressive abortion bill, it's appropriate to remember what slavery meant then, and what it means today.

Slaves' bodies weren't their own. Forced to perform dangerous labor without compensation, their thoughts and hopes didn't concern their masters, who treated them like breeding stock.

Escaping to free states didn't make them free. The Fugitive Slave Law enforced their return. Slaves "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect." There were penalties for helping runaways and rewards for bounty hunters who caught them.

Religious appeals were useless. Slaveowners perverted Christianity to justify slavery. It was God's will, they proclaimed, that they imposed Christianity on unbelieving slaves. Today, involuntary servitude is history. Except, of course, for the majority of North Carolinians who are female.

According to MAGA Republican Mark Robinson, our lieutenant governor, forced birth is today's involuntary servitude: "Once you make a baby, it's not your body anymore. It's the public's," he said.

Childbirth is justifiably called "labor." Pregnancy takes over a woman's body, affecting her cardiovascular, respiratory, and gastrointestinal systems, her kidneys, liver, skin, hormones and metabolism. It depletes calcium from her bones, decreasing bone density. A pregnant woman risks high blood pressure, gestational diabetes, anemia, depression, infection and death.

Surrogate mothers willing to accept these risks can earn \$60-90,000. But unwilling women can be forced to give birth because five unelected U.S. Supreme Court justices decided they have no privacy rights men are bound to respect. MAGA Republicans are stealing more freedom every day. Idaho prohibits women from traveling to "free" states for abortions and punishes anyone who helps. A vigilante law in Texas turns a woman's neighbors into bounty hunters.

MAGA Republican hypocrites justify forced birth on religious grounds. Robinson paid for his girlfriend's abortion in 1989. Now, he denies others that right, saying abortion is wrong "cause God says so."

Whose God? Robinson wants to impose his religious belief, that life begins at fertilization, on Jewish and Muslim women, contrary to their faith. Make no mistake. MAGA Republicans have stolen women's freedom and given slavery in America a brand-new day.

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