

## NPR Ombudsman



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# NPR Changes Abortion Language

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Last week, I wrote a [post](#) about how NPR identifies people who support or oppose abortion. It engendered a lively debate inside and outside NPR. Today, some top editors got together to review the 2005 policy and decided to no longer use "pro-choice" or "pro-life."

Here's the memo that was just distributed to all NPR staff:

"NPR News is revising the terms we use to describe people and groups involved in the abortion debate.

This updated policy is aimed at ensuring the words we speak and write are as clear, consistent and neutral as possible. This is important given that written text is such an integral part of our work.

On the air, we should use "abortion rights supporter(s)/advocate(s)" and "abortion rights opponent(s)" or derivations thereof (for example: "advocates of abortion rights"). It is acceptable to use the phrase "anti-abortion", but do not use the term "pro-abortion rights".

Digital News will continue to use the AP style book for online content, which mirrors the revised NPR policy.

Do not use "pro-life" and "pro-choice" in copy except when used in the name of a group. Of course, when the terms are used in an actuality they should remain." [An actuality is a clip of tape of someone talking. So if a source uses those terms, NPR will not edit them out.]

Thanks  
David

David Sweeney  
Managing Editor