

As a longtime advocate of human rights, I was disappointed that Vice President Joe Biden said this week that he “fully understand(s)” and “won’t second guess” China’s one-child policy. Under the policy, women in many areas of the country face heavy fines and are forced to abort their children (especially girls) if they become pregnant more than once. They also frequently undergo forced sterilizations. The stated purpose of the policy is to control population growth, and a reported 400 million births have been prevented since the policy was instituted in 1979. Not surprisingly, human rights’ advocates on all sides of the political spectrum have strongly criticized the Vice President’s comments.

I believe our nation should condemn China’s one-child policy with moral clarity and consistency. Unfortunately, Vice President Biden missed a golden opportunity to do so. Instead, he chose to merely express concern that the policy could prove economically impractical because there will not be enough workers in China to pay for retiree benefits. While that may be true, Vice President Biden should have first and foremost boldly declared that China’s old-child policy is a repugnant violation of the human rights of women and girls. The failure to condemn the policy on moral grounds signaled that the United States is apathetic towards, and even condones, the policy. While Vice President Biden subsequently released a statement saying that he does have moral objections to the policy, I believe the cause of human rights would have been better served if he had explicitly condemned the policy when talking directly to the people of China.

[Share your thoughts](#)