

Controversy at the Life Matters debate



By [Amy Gibbons](#), Deputy Editor (2015/16)

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On April 20 URY hosted a debate between representatives of the Feminist and newly ratified Life Matters societies, concerning the ethics of abortion. The broadcast sparked controversy after the Life Matters society made inflammatory comments regarding rape and abortion and promoted a pro-life helpline at the end of the interview, having given no prior notice of intending to do so either to the host or their opponents in the debate.

Free speech is a wonderful thing. Without it, we would be stuck for purpose. However, professional debates should be conducted as so; it is important that issues such as abortion are dealt with in a sensitive and mature manner. To suggest that abortion is on par with rape, as the secretary of Life Matters did, is clearly contentious, and frankly unnecessary.

If you want to be taken seriously, and respected as a society of free speech, don't play to your inflammatory stereotype. In addition, violating the rules of the debate by promoting a pro-life helpline is absolutely unacceptable, and indeed undermines the concept of free speech as part of a balanced debate.

So, to all controversial societies out there, take note of the true significance of free speech, and play by the rules. Then you'll have my respect.



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