

Our National History Day Project covers the 1972 Supreme Court case of Eisenstadt v. Baird which established equal protections of personal privacy under the Fourteenth Amendment, and more specifically allowed unmarried women access to contraceptives. Something that is very important to both of us is spreading awareness about topics that are important, but yet not very well known. We are both very passionate about researching civil rights topics that relate to our own identities, and were shocked when we came across the story of Bill Baird and this case and had never heard of it previously. Bill Baird himself told us in the interview we conducted that journalists refuse to cover his story today, and this blew our minds. For how significant the case is and how widespread the impact has been, we knew it was something we needed to tell other people about.

Compared to the niche topic we pursued the past year, we knew that there wouldn't be a lack of information available for a Supreme Court case. However, the challenge then became accessing the volume of primary sources that were available through the Harvard Library Hollis Archive and pursuing a personal interview that offered us unique perspectives about the influence of this case and how it still serves as a turning point today. Although we were denied access to some materials, those they provided access to were incredibly influential. Additionally, the interview not only provided us with highly detailed personal insight, perspective, and context, but provided us with bountiful information that we never would have come across ourselves if not for him. The materials that we were able to access through the Hollis Archive majorly contributed to our primary sources and provided us with tons of images, letters, documents, etc. Our project would not have been the same without these sources.

Although we were very fortunate to have so many primary sources surrounding Bill Baird and his story, one of the ultimate struggles we faced in this process was finding sources and information surrounding the opposing viewpoints. Objectivity and providing complete context is important when discussing historical events, and providing perspectives from all of those involved is one of the most important aspects of this. However, we struggled to find sources to provide information about the social and legal issues that people took with Baird's beliefs and actions in this case.

Ultimately, we feel this case truly encompasses a major turning point in women's history and history of autonomy and privacy in general in the United States. We both feel very passionate about our thesis and our topic; we truly feel that this case and Bill Baird's activism as a whole are revolutionary pieces of history and the precedent that the Supreme Court decision set is one that should not be overlooked or unappreciated. We believe a woman's fundamental right to privacy and control over her own body free from government oppression should be a constitutional right, and this case singlehandedly catalyzed the expansion of these civil liberties throughout the country.