1. **THOUGHTFULLY PROVIDE NOTATION THROUGHOUT THIS ARTICLE TO SHOW EVIDENCE OF YOUR THINKING AS YOU READ (text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections, along with vocab strategies).**
2. **RESPOND TO THE “Food for Thought” SECTION BELOW THE ARTICLE.**

Thousands sign petition calling for status of women minister’s job after abortion vote

[Sarah Boesveld](http://news.nationalpost.com/author/sboes/) | Sep 28, 2012 12:08 AM ET | Last Updated: Sep 28, 2012 10:32 AM ET

By going against party wishes and voting to re-evaluate Canadian policy on where personhood begins, Rona Ambrose, minister of state for the status of women, has sparked not only a backlash, but a debate over whether women can both champion women’s rights and yet have nuanced views about abortion.

Ms. Ambrose faced calls for her resignation and a barrage of criticism Thursday after standing up in support of M-312, a private member’s motion that would have struck a committee to study parts of the Criminal Code that establish when a fetus becomes a legal person.

“Shocked that [the minister] of status of women supported clawing back women’s rights,” tweeted NDP status of women critic Nikki Ashton after the defeated vote Wednesday night. “Time for a new minister.”

An online petition calling for her ouster garnered thousands of signatures Thursday, and organizations including the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada (ARCC) and the Fédération des femmes du Québec publicly demanded that Ms. Ambrose step down.

The Conservative MP for Edmonton-Spruce Grove surprised Andrea Mrozek, the founder of the blog ProWomanProLife, who had never before heard Ms. Ambrose speak out in favour of the anti-abortion movement.

“I don’t have a sweet clue as to whether or not Ambrose is actually pro-life or not,” said Ms. Mrozek, who is also manager of research and communications at the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada. “My defence of her is based on this notion of free speech and representing a diversity of views. I’d be pretty thrilled if she were, but I never thought she was and I still don’t.”

She said Ms. Ambrose’s vote shows that one can be both supportive of women’s rights and in favour of having a discussion about abortion — which is unregulated in Canada and legal at any time, for any reason — or even oppose abortion.

“There are many women, myself included, who do not see so-called abortion rights as part and parcel of women’s rights,” she said.

Anti-abortion and pro-abortion perspectives have clashed in the current U.S. presidential election, spurring demonstrations and counter-demonstrations at the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, N.C., as well as protests against cuts to Planned Parenthood. Also at the DNC, however, were anti-abortion Democrats who support their party but not its staunch pro-choice stance. In Canada, pro-choicers have lately found themselves divided over sex-selective abortions, which the Canadian Medical Association Journal has warned are becoming more frequent as Canada receives more immigrants from eastern, patriarchal countries.

Concerns over this practice spurred Ms. Ambrose, who also holds the public works and government services portfolios, to vote for the motion, she said Wednesday night.

“I have repeatedly raised concerns about discrimination of girls by sex selection abortion,” Ms. Ambrose tweeted. “No law needed, but we need awareness!”

The executive director of the Abortion Coalition, Joyce Arthur, called the MP’s vote “a shocking failure.”

“It’s her job to represent the interests of women, to defend women’s rights, promote women’s equality. We feel she’s betrayed the women of this country,” she said. “[Ms. Ambrose] seems to think the status of women is a little bit below that of a fertilized egg. Frankly, we’re insulted.”

The Minister has long been on ARCC’s list of anti-choice MPs because she voted for two earlier bills that would have affected the legal status of a fetus — one that would have made it a crime to injure a fetus through an illegal assault against the mother, and another that would have banned coercing a woman into having an abortion — even though Prime Minister Stephen Harper asked his party not to.

Ms. Arthur said she believes unrestricted abortion and women’s rights are inseparable.

“The right to control your body and your fertility and decide such fundamental questions as to whether to have a child, that is absolutely basic to women’s rights,” she said.

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT:**

1. **What, ultimately are Ms. Ambrose’s critics finding at fault here? Get to the heart of it. (Analysis level)**
2. **Are you also a critic of her decision to vote in favour of opening up a re-evaluation of our Canadian policy on abortion, and where “personhood” begins? This is some pretty hefty Evaluation here, peeps...**