



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on June 20, 2013

Major Pro-life Bill Passes U.S. House, Faces Pro-abortion Majority in Senate

In what is being termed a landmark pro-life gain, on June 18 the House of Representatives passed the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act (H.R. 1797), a measure that would ban abortions across the nation after a woman's 20th week of pregnancy. The bill passed by a 228-196 margin, with six Democrats voting for the bill and six Republicans voting against it. The bill, which has already been passed in at least nine states, is modeled on legislative language crafted by the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC), and is based on overwhelming scientific evidence that a pre-born baby can feel pain by at least the 20th week of pregnancy.



While pro-life leaders considered passage of the bill in the House a historic milestone in the battle to protect the unborn, legislative observers said there is little chance that it will make it through the Democrat-controlled U.S. Senate — if it is even allowed up for a vote. [Baptist Press News](#) reported that Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) indicated he may not allow the bill to make it to the floor of the Senate, and President Obama promised a veto if the bill somehow reaches his desk.

In a policy statement, the White House expressed its strong opposition to the bill, calling it “a direct challenge to *Roe v. Wade*” that “shows contempt for women’s health and rights, the role doctors play in their patients’ health care decisions, and the Constitution.”

National Right to Life president Carol Tobias noted that the intense opposition from Obama and pro-abortion lawmakers defies the will of most Americans. “This legislation reflects the views of the overwhelming majority of both men and women,” Tobias said, pointing out that a recent nationwide poll found that 64 percent of Americans support legislation to protect pre-born babies who can feel pain. “The Obama White House, and all but a handful of House Democrats, fought for essentially unlimited abortion in the sixth month or later, despite growing public awareness of the violence perpetrated by late-term abortionists such as Kermit Gosnell and the pain they inflict on unborn babies,” she said. Tobias added that she was not surprised by Obama’s promise of a veto if H.R. 1797 were somehow passed, recalling that “as a legislator Barack Obama said he would trust abortionists to take good care of any babies born alive — he would trust the Gosnells, in other words. Obama’s veto threat harkened back to his opposition to the ban on partial-birth abortion, and his attacks on the Supreme Court for upholding the ban on that brutal method of late abortion.”

Rep. Trent Franks (R-Ariz.), the bill’s sponsor, said passage of the measure in the House “marks the first time in history, in either chamber of the U.S. Congress, that affirmative protection has been extended to unborn children. It is my prayer that today also marks a day when America finally opens her eyes to the humanity of these little victims and the inhumanity of what is being done to them.”



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Advocates of the bill have cited the horrific case of Gosnell, Philadelphia's notorious late-term abortionist now serving a life sentence for the "post-birth" abortions of three babies, as a prime reason why the Unborn Child Protection Act is needed. It is estimated that Gosnell and his staff are responsible for the murders of hundreds of babies who were born alive at Gosnell's inner-city Philadelphia clinic over the past decades.

But abortion proponents used the House passage of the measure as opportunity for a diatribe on the supposed "war against women" they insist the bill represents. Planned Parenthood head Cecile Richards issued a statement claiming that the bill is part of "an orchestrated effort to roll back women's rights and access to health care across the country — and it is hurting the women who need more access to health care, not less."

Ilyse Hogue of the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) described the pre-born child protection measure as nothing more than "anti-choice lawmakers in Congress catering to the most extreme wing of their political base. What they seem not to care about is that their political agenda puts the health of women across the country at great risk. This bill is yet another example of how anti-choice leaders in Congress have ignored the results of the last election." She audaciously added that Congress "should be working on the country's real, pressing challenges, not wasting their time and our money re-fighting 40-year-old battles and putting women's health and safety in jeopardy in order to advance their own political agenda."

During House debate Rep. Gwen Moore (D-Wis.) called the bill "an abomination," declaring that "plain and simple, at its foundation, at its heart, is utter disrespect for the dignity and health of women." Moore insisted that the bill is "born of ignorance and disregard for medical science in every way, shape, and form." Other liberal House members called the bill "stupid" (Charlie Dent, D-Pa.), "offensive" (Debbie Wasserman Schultz, D-Fla.), "cowardly," (Louise Slaughter, D-N.Y.), and "cruel," (Jerry Nadler, D-N.Y.).

Far different were the comments of Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.), who was forced to hold back tears as she spoke out for those the bill would protect, admonishing her House colleagues: "May we, in love, defend the unborn. May we, in humility, confront this national sin, and may we mourn what abortion reveals about the conscience of our nation." In her comments on the House floor Foxx noted that as a nation "we go to extraordinary lengths to save, not only human beings but even animals, because we value life so much. However, there are many who do not hold the unborn in the same esteem, and that is tragic. There's nothing more important than protecting voiceless, unborn children and their families from the travesty of abortion."

Rep. Kristi Noem (R-S.D.) expressed her hope that "stopping atrocities against little babies is something we can agree to put an end to. We're talking about babies who, if they were born and simply given a chance, they could survive outside the womb." And Rep. Ann Wagner (R-Mo.) told her fellow lawmakers: "As science and technology continue to advance, we are changing hearts and mind. It is not only the pain of the child we must consider, but also the pain of the mother. Everyone talks about the right to choose, but no one discusses the implications of that choice. I am for life at all stages. I am for the life of the baby, and I am also for the life of the mother. I will continue to work for a day when abortion is not only illegal, but absolutely unthinkable."

Charmaine Yoest of Americans United for Life applauded Franks, Foxx, Noem, Wagner, and the rest of the House lawmakers responsible for passing the bill on to the Senate, thanking them "for respecting the viewpoint of the vast majority of women, who do not support such gruesome abortion procedures



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performed against fully formed infants. This bill both safeguards unborn children and takes an important and necessary step toward protecting the health and safety of women from the dangers of inherent abortion.”

Marjorie Dannenfelser of the pro-life Susan B. Anthony List called the measure a “pro-woman, pro-science, constitutional bill [that] deserves an immediate vote in the U.S. Senate,” adding that “women and the unborn deserve better than abortion, and making late-term abortions illegal is a simple step in that direction.”



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