

Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on May 14, 2015

House Approves Late-Term Abortions Ban

House Republicans approved a late-term abortion ban on Wednesday after a controversial rape provision was removed from the bill's language. Female Republican lawmakers had threatened to rebel against the bill if the provision remained in the bill.

The measure passed in a mostly party-line [242-to-184 vote](#), with one member voting present, reports the *New York Times*.

The bill, entitled the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, forbids most abortions after the 20th week of pregnancy. In cases involving minors that were victims of assault, the measure allows abortions if the assault is reported to police or government agencies that serve child-abuse victims. The bill does not make exceptions for adult incest.

The original rape provision required women who became pregnant through rape to report their assault to law enforcement authorities in order to be eligible for an abortion after 20 weeks. The new language requires victims of rape to receive medical care or counseling at least 48 hours before an abortion.

Fox News reports that in January, Republicans were compelled to postpone a vote after Republican women and moderates objected to the rape requirements. Those objectors have indicated satisfaction with the changed language.

“This has a much less punitive substance to it,” said Representative Jackie Walorski (R-Ind.). “It’s important that when we look at the care of women who are in crisis that we make sure they’re totally taken care of.”

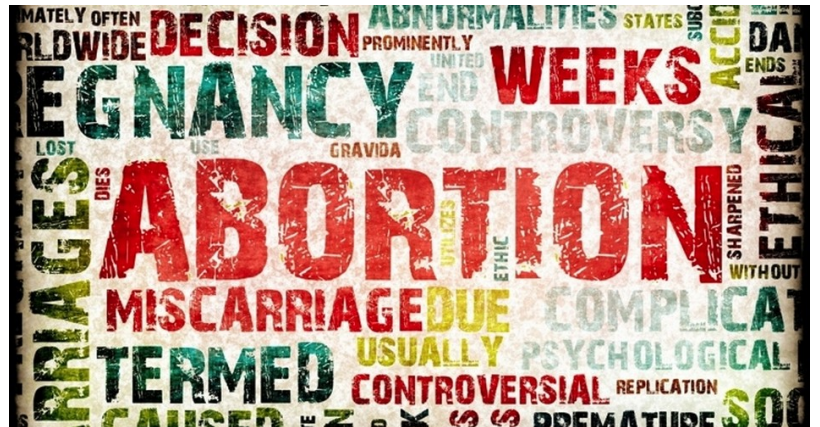
Lawmakers set abortion limits for pregnancies beyond 20 weeks, citing evidence that the unborn child can feel pain. “It’s time to open our eyes and allow our consciences to catch up with our technology,” said Representative Trent Franks (R-Ariz.), the bill’s chief sponsor.

In fact, there is evidence that fetuses can feel pain even earlier than 20 weeks. According to Dr. Maureen Condic, an associate professor of neurobiology and anatomy at the University of Utah who testified before Congress in 2013, fetuses can feel pain as early as eight weeks into the pregnancy.

“The neural circuitry responsible for the most primitive response to pain, the spinal reflex, is in place by 8 weeks of development,” she explained in her testimony. “This is the earliest point at which the fetus experiences pain in any capacity.”

According to the Guttmacher Institute, 42 states already ban abortions after certain points in pregnancy. Ten of those states ban abortions after 20 weeks.

"No matter how it is shouted down, or what distortions, deceptive what-ifs, distractions, diversions,





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gotchas, twisting of words, changing the subject or blatant falsehoods the abortion industry hurls at this bill and its supporters,” said Franks, “this bill is a deeply sincere effort, beginning at their sixth month of pregnancy, to protect both mothers and their pain-capable unborn babies from the atrocity of late-term abortion on demand.”

Republicans were able to garner support from pro-life groups by adding in extra protections for unborn babies. Fox News reports:

If an abortion doctor believes the fetus could survive outside the womb, a second doctor must be present to care for it, including taking it to a hospital. Women would also have to sign consent forms describing the fetus’ age and the steps to be taken to save its life.

House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) called the bill “the most pro-life legislation to ever come before this body,” adding, “We should all be proud to take this stand today.”

The bill is believed to have an uncertain future in the Senate. If it manages to pass, President Obama is expected to veto it.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) has openly supported the bill, but according to McConnell’s deputy chief of staff, is unlikely to give it immediate consideration in the Senate.



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