



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on January 23, 2015

House GOP Drops One Abortion Bill, Passes Another, As March For Life Fills D.C. Streets

With lines of anti-abortion demonstrators stretching for blocks beneath Capitol windows, House Republicans passed one abortion bill Thursday after abruptly dropping another one earlier in the day. By a near party-line vote of 242-179, the House passed a bill to forbid federal funds for most abortions and ban tax credits for purchase of abortion coverage under the “ObamaCare” health insurance law. The bill faces an uncertain fate in the Senate and, should it pass there, a nearly certain veto by President Obama.



On a trip out West to promote the economic agenda he trumpeted in Tuesday night’s State of the Union Address, Obama praised the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision that overturned state abortions laws and declared that access to abortion is a constitutional right. That decision, he said “reaffirms a fundamental American value: that government should not intrude in our most private and personal family matters.” The House-passed bill, said the president, would “intrude on women’s reproductive freedom and access to health care and unnecessarily restrict the private insurance choices that consumers have today.”

The bill would make permanent a ban on federal funding for abortion that has been renewed each year since the passage of the Hyde amendment in the 1970s. The prohibition includes exceptions for case of rape, incest, or danger to the life of the mother. The bill would eliminate tax credits that individuals and employers may earn for purchasing insurance plans covering abortion through the exchanges created by the Affordable Care Act, and would forbid the District of Columbia from using its money to cover abortions for lower-income women. House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) issued a statement praising Thursday’s March for Life and hailing passage of the bill.

“This march is part of a longer one,” Boehner said, “and our destination is clear: to secure and protect the rights of every unborn child. When there is disagreement, we should pause and listen closely. When there is movement, we should rejoice, and the House’s vote to ban taxpayer funding of abortion is cause for doing so.”

The vote came just hours after House Republicans abandoned a bill to ban most abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy, the point of gestation where the unborn infant can feel pain, supporters of the measure say. GOP leaders had scheduled a vote on the “Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act” Thursday, but scratched the measure after some Republicans complained that the exception for rape applied only when the rape was reported to police. The U.S. Department of Justice has estimated 70 percent of rapes go unreported, often because of victims’ fear of retribution by their assailants.

The bill began losing footing last week during a closed-door Republican retreat, UPI reported, when several House members expressed concerns that the issue would turn away younger voters. House



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leaders were also reluctant to force a vote on a bill opposed by many Republican women.

But as tens of thousands of demonstrators marched from the Capitol building to the Supreme Court Thursday, Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers of Washington, the fourth-ranking Republican leader in the House, encouraged marchers in their support of the right to life. Her seven-year-old-son, who has Down syndrome, has strengthened her own commitment to that cause, she said. "Every child and every life is a gift," she told the crowd.

Marchers carried signs, some reading "Defend Life," "I am a voice for the voiceless" and "Thank God my mom's pro-life." Dozens of demonstrators visited the Capitol Hill office of Rep. Renee Ellmers (R-N.C.) to protest her role in deep-sixing the bill on banning abortions after 20 weeks, despite her strong record of voting against abortion.

"It was insulting, it was heartbreaking," said Brandi Swindell, CEO of Stanton Healthcare of Boise, Idaho. "We want to see our pro-life lawmakers standing with us, not against us."

Photo of pro-lifers marching past the capitol in Washington, D.C., Jan. 22, 2015: AP Images



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