



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on July 5, 2011

Poland's Parliament Considers Total Abortion Ban

Thanks to a massive grassroots pro-life campaign, lawmakers in Poland have cast an initial vote in favor of legislation that would ban all abortions in that country. As reported by the website LifeNews.com, the effort was headed by the Polish pro-life group PRO Foundation (website graphic, left), which organized a grassroots campaign to lobby members of Parliament to support the measure. Additionally, noted the pro-life website, "the nation's Catholic bishops have also played an integral role in advancing the legislation."



[AFP News](#) reported that Poland's lower house of Parliament, the Sejm, voted 254-151 to send the bill on to a committee for further consideration, following an effort by the liberal Democratic Left Alliance to derail the measure. The committee will include its findings in a subsequent version of the bill, which it will present to Parliament in September.

The bill, which was prompted after pro-life activists collected several hundred thousand petitions in two weeks, "would remove the rape and incest exceptions from the current federal law in Poland and provide protection for pregnant women and unborn children starting at conception," reported LifeNews. Current Polish abortion law, which is among the most restrictive in Europe, allows for the procedure only in cases related to the health of the mother, if the pregnancy was the result of "illegal activity," or if it has been determined that the unborn child will be disabled.

But according to LifeNews, some Polish abortionists "have reportedly manipulated the law to do abortions on children with minor problems such as a cleft palate and others are misreporting the fetal age of the unborn baby at the time of the abortion to escape prosecution."

In an open letter to the country's lawmakers, a group of Polish "[women journalists](#)" said that the measure would help to restore moral order to the nation, adding that a vote for the bill:

would be a vote for the protection of women, and the protection of their relationship with their children. It would also be a vote for the restoration of dignity and respect for motherhood. It would be in the interest not only of women and children, but also of fathers, families, and all of society.

A similar letter by Polish "[men journalists](#)" declared,

Everyone's duty is to counteract evil and defend public welfare. Furthermore, a man's duty is to protect women and children, especially when threatened by the predations of abortionists. [The] true challenge of our civilization is to halt the killing of defenseless children, a crime that does unimaginable harm to their mothers. Thanks to a grassroots initiative to defend life, Polish lawmakers have a chance to rise to this challenge. This legislative proposal ... gives our legislators a golden opportunity to write both Polish and European history.

Leaders of the Church in Poland have also been outspoken in support of the bill. Archbishop Jozef



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Michalik of *Przemyśl* told the Polish Catholic publication [Go?? Niedzielny](#), “It has to be stated clearly that the current Polish law concerning protection of life is not perfect, it is sick, and now the Parliament will have a chance to heal it.”

Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz added that the Church “clearly teaches that it is the obligation of Catholics not to protect the current ‘compromise,’ but to aim at complete protection of life.” He called the bill a solution “which the Church calls for. I support all efforts aiming at improving the protection of human life.”

Archbishop Michalik said that Catholic legislators had a special obligation to support the bill:

If a parliamentarian declaring himself as a Catholic with awareness, deep faith, and a formed conscience, did not support a total ban on abortion, he would certainly have to go to confession, convert, vow to correct himself, and publicly take back, or even mend his wrong decision.

[T]hose who refuse to support good legislative changes are launching a heavy burden on their conscience and are showing that they do not consider God’s law and natural law binding, or that they value their own interpretation over the voice of the Church. At best, they are people living in a mistake.

LifeNews recalled that the “Nazi invasion in World War II brought legalized abortions to Poland and the situation was exacerbated under Communist rule by the Soviet Union.” In 1993, after Poland was freed from communism, the country’s Parliament passed the current law which bans most abortions, but still leaves the exceptions, which opponents of the newest proposal insisted were a “good compromise.”

But Michalik challenged the exceptions, asking:

How can you talk about a good compromise if in three cases it allows for the killing of the unborn? You cannot, as it is happening currently, take away the lives of sick or disabled children, or because the child’s parents committed a crime or somebody committed a crime against the parents.

Noting that the Church’s leadership has never agreed “to any exceptions to an unconditional ban on abortion,” the archbishop concluded:

Always when God’s law is not respected, we have to sound the alarm and aim for changing the sick law. We cannot allow the society to be lulled to sleep with deceitful slogans about progress. You cannot separate life from conscience, from faith. You cannot evade the effort to solve even the most difficult matters in accordance with morality.

Jacek Sapa of the PRO Foundation said that the pro-life legislation offers Poland an opportunity:

to finally reject the heritage of Nazism and Communism which brought “legal abortion” to Poland in the first place. It was Hitler and Stalin who imposed it on Poles, and it’s high time we clearly disassociate ourselves from those deadly ideologies.



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