

# House Passes Nationwide Ban on Abortions After 20 Weeks

Missouri Right to Life received the following release from National Right to Life:

## **NRLC-BACKED BILL TO PROTECT PAIN-CAPABLE UNBORN CHILDREN IN SIXTH MONTH AND LATER PASSES U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, 228-196**

WASHINGTON (June 18, 2013) -- The Republican-controlled U.S. House of Representatives today passed landmark legislation to provide nationwide protection for unborn children who are capable of feeling pain, beginning at 20 weeks fetal age (equivalent to "22 weeks of pregnancy"), the beginning of the sixth month. The legislation, the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act (H.R. 1797), is based on model legislation developed by the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC), the federation of state right-to-life organizations. The bill passed by a vote of 228-196, with six House members crossing party lines in each direction.

**"This legislation reflects the views of the overwhelming majority of both men and women,"** said NRLC President Carol Tobias. **"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."**

Tobias said a veto threat issued yesterday by the Obama White House was not surprising, **"because 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."**

H.R. 1797 is based on an NRLC model bill that has already been enacted in nine states. In a nationwide poll of 1,003 registered voters in March, The Polling Company found that 64% would support a law such as the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act prohibiting abortion after 20 weeks -- when an unborn baby can feel pain -- unless the life of the mother is in danger. Only 30% opposed such legislation. Women voters split 63%-31% in support of such a law, and 63% of independent voters supported it.

H.R. 1797 would allow abortion after 20 weeks post-fertilization if the mother's life is endangered, or in cases of rape and incest reported prior to the abortion to appropriate authorities.

H.R. 1797 contains congressional findings of fact regarding the medical evidence that unborn children experience pain at least by 20 weeks "post-fertilization age," or the start of the sixth month. The bill generally bars abortion after that point, with an exception that applies when an acute physical condition endangers the life of the mother. Note: 20 weeks post-fertilization age ("fetal age") is equivalent to "22 weeks of pregnancy" in the widely employed "LMP" dating system. Journalists who wish to translate into the "weeks of pregnancy" or "weeks of gestation" (LMP) dating system are free to do so, of course, but if they write that the bill would "ban abortion at 20 weeks of pregnancy," they are in error by two weeks. In the "weeks of pregnancy" system, the bill applies at 22 weeks.

Some of the extensive evidence that unborn children have the capacity to experience pain, at least by 20 weeks fetal age, is available on the NRLC website at [http://www.nrlc.org/abortion/Fetal\\_Pain/index.html](http://www.nrlc.org/abortion/Fetal_Pain/index.html) and also here: <http://www.doctorsonfetalpain.com/>

The science behind the findings in the bill was explored at a May 23 congressional hearing. The testimony of the witnesses is posted here: [http://www.nrlc.org/abortion/Fetal\\_Pain/Witnesses1797Hearing052313.html](http://www.nrlc.org/abortion/Fetal_Pain/Witnesses1797Hearing052313.html).

A medical illustration of one common method of late abortion ("D&E") is posted here: <http://www.nrlc.org/abortion/pba/DEabortiongraphic.html>

*Missouri Right to Life is the Missouri affiliate of National Right to Life. Please help us continue our pro-life efforts: to donate [click here](#).*