

Missouri Right to Life supports passage of HB 1714, the Unborn Child Protection from Dismemberment Abortion Act. This is model legislation carefully crafted by the National Right to Life Committee and tailored for Missouri.

The focus of this bill is the small, living, human unborn child

Facing a brutal and inhumane dismemberment abortion.

Before the first trimester ends, the unborn child has a beating heart, brain waves, fingerprints and every organ system in place. She can turn her head... frown... kick... swim... even grasp objects placed in her hand. This information is no secret since ultrasounds have become a routine part of pregnancy care.

In fact, a 2010 research project used 4-D ultrasound to carefully monitor twin babies in utero from the 14th-18th week and concluded that unborn twins execute purposeful movements specifically aimed at the co-twin that were not accidental, including stroking each other for 30% of each day! (Castiello.U.et al; DOI.10.1371/journal.pone.0013199)

The unborn child from 13-22 weeks gestation (see images, attachment 1) will grow from 4 ½ to 10 inches in length and is too large to be aborted via suction tube.

Abortions are illegal in Missouri from 22 weeks gestation forward due to the viability of the baby. However, research shows that the unborn child's pain capability within her physical structures and "wiring" for pain are functioning before 22 weeks. Connections between the spinal cord and the thalamus, the region of the brain largely responsible for pain perception in both the unborn child and the adult, began to form around 12 weeks and are completed by 18 weeks. (Kostovic I, Goldman-Rakie PS: Comp Neurol 219:431-447, 1983)

According to the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, 827 abortions were performed in 2014, using what is termed the "D&E" (dilation & evacuation) abortion method method.

In a dismemberment abortion, the abortionist uses "clamps, grasping forceps, tongs, scissors or similar instruments, "to repeatedly enter the mother's womb and tear off and remove parts of a living unborn child's body, piece by piece, including crushing and extracting the skull. (see medical illustration in attachment 2 and testimony of Anthony Levatino, M.D. given at the hearing in Kansas on a similar bill.)

In *Stenberg v. Carhart*, Justice Anthony Kennedy observed that in D&E/dismemberment abortions, "The fetus, in many cases, dies just as a human adult or child would: It bleeds to death as it is torn limb from limb." Defendant Carhart admitted, "I know that the fetus is alive during the process most of the time because I can see the fetal heartbeat on the ultrasound." (see attachment 3 for more abortionists' quotes on the procedure.)

The contemplation of just one such act of dismembering a living human being is breath-taking, especially in a society that criminalizes animal cruelty.

The United States Supreme Court in *Gonzales v. Carhart* described dismemberment abortions as a procedure that is “laden with the power to devalue human life,” and abortion supporter, Justice Ruth Bader-Ginsburg pointed out, “the standard D&E is in some respects as brutal, if not more,” than the partial-birth abortion method.

The Court in *Gonzales* said, “the State may use its regulatory power to bar certain procedures and substitute others, all in furtherance of its legitimate interests in regulating the medical profession in order to promote respect for life, including life of the unborn.” (see attachment 4 for U.S. Supreme Court statements on states’ right to regulate.)

Gonzales upheld the ban on partial-birth abortions citing the findings of Congress that “not to prohibit it will further coarsen society to the humanity of not only newborns, but all vulnerable and innocent human life, making it increasingly difficult to protect such life.”

In essence, the Supreme Court ruled that a method of abortion could be banned if other methods were available. Other abortion methods are available for second-trimester abortions.

Abortion by dismemberment is currently the dominant method for second-trimester abortion in Missouri, but perhaps that is because it offers, “more predictable timing” and “greater cost savings” according to the 2009 National Abortion Federation Abortion Training Textbook’s chapter on D&E.

We might add here that the former director of the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Gail Vasterling, and the current director of the Department of Health and Senior Services, Peter Lyskowski who just recently testified before this committee, said that they do not know what happens to all the baby body parts after abortions in Missouri Planned Parenthoods.

We are not suggesting that some methods of abortion are morally acceptable. We are asking for accountability and action be taken in Missouri where the dehumanizing, and excruciatingly painful, method of killing unborn children through D&E abortions is a daily activity. Missouri Right to Life is recommending that Missouri follow the signals given by the *Gonzales* Court and apply the rationale they used in their discussion of “devaluing human life” by enacting HB 1714. HB 1714 addresses the recent issues in Missouri.

HB 1714 carefully delineates dismemberment abortion to exclude suction abortion. In addition, HB 1714 includes a medical emergency exception, criminal and civil penalties, and privacy protection for court proceedings.

Missouri Right to Life urges you to pass HB 1714 and strike down an unnecessary abortion method that calls into question our humanity.