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www.nrlc.org/abortion/pba/index.html

U.S. House Again Passes Ban on Partial-Birth Abortion, 274-151; With No Veto Backstop, Will the Senate Democratic Leader Kill the Ban?

WASHINGTON (July 24, 2002) -- The U.S. House of Representatives today approved the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act by a lopsided, bipartisan vote of 274-151.

Congress has approved national bans on partial-birth abortion twice before, but they were vetoed by President Clinton in 1996 and 1997. On each occasion, the House voted to override the vetoes, but supporters fell short of the necessary two-thirds majority in the Senate.

The Senate last considered the bill in 1999, when 63 senators voted to pass it (including 14 Democrats), with an additional two supporters absent. **Yet the bill is in peril in the Senate, because Senate Democratic Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD) is closely allied with the pro-abortion lobby, which vehemently opposes the bill. Daschle could employ the procedural powers of the majority leader to prevent an up-and-down vote on the House-passed bill.**

“If there was a clean up-and-down vote on the bill passed by the House, the Senate would approve it,” said Douglas Johnson, legislative director for the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC). “If the ban on partial-birth abortion does not reach President Bush for his signature, the blame will rest squarely on the Senate Democratic leadership.”

Most partial-birth abortions are performed in the fifth and sixth months of pregnancy. There is abundant medical evidence that the baby at this stage is extremely sensitive to pain. Indeed, at this stage, an infant who delivers spontaneously is usually *born alive*.

When legislation dealing with partial-birth abortion was first introduced in Congress in 1995, major pro-abortion groups insisted that the method was used only a few hundred times a year, and only in cases involving acute medical crises -- claims repeated by some lawmakers today. But such claims were entirely discredited by early 1997, when the executive director of the National Coalition of Abortion Providers admitted that the procedure is performed thousands of times annually, mostly on healthy babies of healthy mothers. (See clippings at www.nrlc.org/abortion/pba/index.html.)

Many lawmakers who oppose the bill say they instead favor a bill to ban “late-term” abortions with a “health” exception. The leading House advocate of this counter-proposal, Congressman Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), has candidly admitted that this so-called “ban” actually would allow third-trimester abortions even for “mental health.” (See www.nrlc.org/abortion/pba/Phony%20ban%20on%20late-term.pdf.) In the Senate, a similar phony ban has been promoted by Senator Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) and others.

Further documentation on partial-birth abortion is posted at www.nrlc.org/abortion/pba/index.html. See especially “Key Facts on Partial-Birth Abortion” (www.nrlc.org/abortion/pba/KeyfactsJune02.html), and NRLC’s congressional testimony of March 11, 1997 (www.nrlc.org/abortion/pba/test.html).