

# 5 Surprising Insights on the Pain-Capable Bill—From a Nurse, a Senator and Leading Pro-Life Voices

On the eve of Pope Francis' visit to Washington, including his historic address to Congress on Thursday morning, all eyes are on Washington.

Not coincidentally, it dovetails with another much-anticipated moment. Hundreds of Congressional candidates in the 2014 election ran on a pro-life platform—specifically committing to pass the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, which bans most abortions after a baby's 20th week of development in the womb.

On Tuesday, this bill is up for a vote in the Senate; it's noted by many as the most significant pro-life Senate vote since the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003. Leaders speaking up for pre-born lives have emphasized this bill for over a year.

From a former nurse to a current United States Senator, we've asked leaders the tough questions on why this Pain-Capable bill matters for America.

## **U.S. Senator: Our Culture Needs to Rediscover the Value of Every Life**

Steve Daines (R-Mont.) left a successful business career to run for Congress. When he joined with Senator Joni Ernst (R-Iowa) and others to back this pro-life effort, Bound4LIFE writer Marisa Kwaning sat down to ask what drives his involvement and how he believes it's possible to win over the other side.

**Bound4LIFE:** On June 11, the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act was introduced in the U.S. Senate; you are one of 45 Senators currently co-sponsoring the bill. Why is this policy important for our nation to consider?

**Steve Daines:** We must fight for the most vulnerable in our society: the elderly, the disabled and the unborn. They do not have a voice here on Capitol Hill. Their right to life is protected by our Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, so we speak up.

This is a bill that a majority of the American people are behind, banning late-term abortions after 20 weeks when a baby can feel pain. This is ground that we can fight on and win—it's good policy, and it's the right battle to be fighting right now on Capitol Hill. We need to try to get legislation passed and on the president's desk.

**Bound4LIFE:** When the Pain-Capable bill is voted on, people will be discussing the issue of abortion—in Congress, on talk shows and among citizens. What do you hope people take away from those conversations?

**Steve Daines:** It's important we have thoughtful discussions as late-term abortion comes up with friends or colleagues. With this issue, public opinion is on our side.

One of the thoughtful questions we could be asking is: "Have you ever gone to Google and typed in '20-week baby' or '20-week fetus'? Try it and click on the images." Suddenly your friend will see what a 20-week-old baby looks like in the womb. That image is clearly a unique life.

It's healthy to raise these questions. People only believe what they discover for themselves. We need to have civil discussions and look at what the facts and the truth are.

**It Took Years to Get This Far, Says the Bill's Author and Lead Sponsor**

Recently a father of twins whom he calls “gifts from God and the joy of my very soul,” Representative Trent Franks (R-Ariz.) authored the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act and is the lead sponsor in the U.S. House.

Encouraged by the strong 242-184 majority vote his bill received on May 13, Franks has been doing everything possible to advance the bill further—including a public event last week in which he discussed policy issues with media.

**Bound4LIFE:** Could you talk about the science that undergirds this bill and why it was designed to protect “pain-capable” lives?

**Trent Franks:** The bill has a lot of scientific findings to show that babies feel pain beginning at the sixth month.

We were actually very conservative [with the findings], because some show that pre-born babies feel pain earlier than that. As the lead sponsor of this bill, it’s hard for me that any pre-born life would be left out of it.

But the truth is, it’s incontrovertible at that point. No one, except someone who’s just a demagogue or a liar or a complete moron—forgive me, we always have to include all the possibilities—will truly debate that a child feels pain beginning at the fifth month. There’s no debate about that.

We have to start there. Because if we win there, then we have a better chance to win and protect the ones at an earlier developmental stage. The hope is that we can humanize the child, to the point that people will really know what we’re talking about.

A majority of Americans don’t like the idea of killing little babies tortuously and painfully without anesthetic. The day they do, is the day we’ve all lost our battle.

**The Former Nurse Who Led a Protest of Speaker John Boehner**

Jill Stanek is no stranger to controversy. As a nurse in Illinois, she was one of the first to raise the alarm about the lack of protection for infants born-alive following abortions, which led her to face off against then-Illinois State Senator Barack Obama.

This spring, Stanek led a protest of Speaker John Boehner's office when it seemed that House leadership was not prioritizing the Pain-Capable bill. Only minutes before her arrest (and subsequent release) by Capitol Police, she answered a few questions.

**Bound4LIFE:** Some pro-life advocates believe that emphasizing the pre-born baby's pain, as this policy does, only invites abortion providers to introduce anesthesia before the procedure. How do you answer this objection?

**Jill Stanek:** This proposed bill is a ban on abortions after 20 weeks development. There have been certain bills put out that say you have to advise the mother that the baby feels pain and then she can decide. This is saying we know the baby feels pain and there is little wiggle room after a certain developmental stage.

They could try to introduce an anesthesia loophole, but it doesn't bode well for the other side's talking points. At this point, they are denying that these babies feel pain—which is denying biology. Babies this same age who are being operated on in utero are being given anesthesia.

It only underlines the fact that this is a living pre-born baby, so I do not think they would ever fight for that.

**The Ph.D. Who Left a Position at Harvard and Works on Behalf of Pre-Born Babies**

The path of Ivy League research scholars is not typically to address abortion-related issues with statistical analysis.

Yet after earning degrees from Dartmouth and Stanford, Dr. Michael New offers his academic expertise to the pro-life movement—working with Charlotte Lozier Institute to interpret data on current abortion rates and study whether pro-life legislation actually saves lives. He answered a few questions via a phone interview from his university office.

**Bound4LIFE:** Right now in Washington, the Pain-Capable bill remains a topic of hot discussion. What is your view on this proposed policy from a research perspective?

**Michael New:** Focusing attention on late-term abortion is smart, both for political and policy reasons.

The open discussion of partial-birth abortion in the mid-1990s fundamentally changed the debate. Public opinion shifted after that debate started, as they saw pictures of aborted pre-born children even in mainstream media. It became hard to avoid, which led many people away from a hardline pro-abortion stance.

On this ban after 20-weeks development, demographics that are not typically pro-life are supportive. Several polls show women are more likely to support a 20-week ban than men. The data show there isn't an age gap: Young people are as likely to support this proposal as folks of an older generation.

I find it interesting to see how pro-abortion groups are reacting. A number of states have passed a 20-week ban on abortions—based on the pre-born child's pain capability as well as dangers to the mother.

Most of these are not being challenged in court. Perhaps these groups realize they would lose a legal challenge, which would set a “bad precedent” in their thinking. Even though they are making statements against the laws, they are generally not contesting the 20-week ban in the states.

It's wise to advance on a policy with broad support, which the

issue of protecting pain-capable unborn children certainly has.

## **□She Served Her State for 18 Years—Then Planned Parenthood Attacked**

Bette Grande never planned to be a legislator. Concerned about what her children were being taught in school, this mother of three first ran for the local school board. She ended up serving North Dakota as a state representative for 18 years.

During the 2014 elections, she notes that Planned Parenthood “poured close to two million dollars” into North Dakota and sealed her narrow defeat. Grande, who authored several pro-life laws at the state level, offered her perspective on the Pain-Capable bill in our final interview question.

**Bound4LIFE:** In your view, what is the goal of pro-life legislation?

**Bette Grande:** Pro-life bills are not about trying to “legislate away” abortion. That by itself would not matter. As leaders, we need to shine a light so people in our society will open their eyes and change their hearts, minds and souls.

Society must change before we will stop abortion as a whole. There has to be a conscience that is awakened. If there were a law enacted tomorrow that somehow made abortion illegal, abortion would not stop tomorrow. Let’s be honest about that.

The most important portion of this debate is the fact that we are no longer in our society talking about a “blob of tissue.”

For 40 years, pro-choice advocates got away with this “blob of tissue” talk. Instead, the public discussion has now turned to: At what point does the baby feel pain in the womb? At what point are we hearing a baby’s heartbeat?

People are starting to ask themselves and ponder these questions. The pro-abortion side knows exactly what we are talking about and the recent Planned Parenthood videos prove that in a disturbing way.

This matters a lot when we talk about a young mother who is trying to decide if she is going to abort or keep her child.

She is going to hear in the back of her mind what she heard on the news, what she saw in the paper: The baby's heart is beating. The baby can feel pain. And she's not going to go in and have the abortion.

Changing hearts, minds and souls—that's what this whole thing is about.

A vote on the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, co-sponsored by Senator Joni Ernst and dozens of her colleagues, is expected on Tuesday afternoon.

*After 10 years on staff at The Heritage Foundation and Focus on the Family, **Josh M. Shepherd** currently serves in communications at Bound4LIFE International—a grass-roots movement to pray for the ending of abortion and for revival worldwide. Reprinted with permission from Bound4LIFE.*