

Bill Banning Sex-Selection Abortions Fails in House

The U.S. House of Representatives on Thursday conducted a roll-call vote on the Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act (H.R. 3541), a bill that would make it illegal to perform or coerce a sex-selection abortion.

The vote was 246-168 in favor of the bill—a strong majority, although short of the two-thirds vote required under the current fast-track procedure.

In a statement obtained exclusively by ABC News late Wednesday, the White House acknowledged that President Obama opposes the bill.

“We are heartened that a strong majority of House members voted to ban performing or coercing abortions for the purpose of eliminating unborn babies of an undesired sex—usually, girls,” said National Right to Life Committee legislative director Douglas Johnson. “Shamefully, President Obama, and a minority of 168 House members, complied with the political demands of pro-abortion pressure groups, rather than defend the coerced women, and their unborn daughters, who are victimized by sex-selection abortions.”

Among the organizations that warned House members not to vote for the bill was the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA), the nation’s major abortion provider. According to the NRLC, PPFA sent an email memo to House members on May 29 warning of its “intent to score” a vote for the bill as a vote against “women’s health.”

Also on May 29, *The Huffington Post* reported that “no Planned Parenthood clinic will deny a woman an abortion based on her reasons for wanting one, except in those states that explicitly prohibit sex-selective abortions (Arizona,

Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and Illinois).”

The U.S. Congress has already condemned gender-selective abortion in China, but PRENDA is the first nationwide attempt to address the practice.

Widespread sex-selective abortion has resulted in lopsided gender ratios in parts of China and especially India. Studies in India reveal that those families in higher income brackets and with greater access to education are the most likely to practice gender-selective abortion.

“Churches should be among the first to stand up for vulnerable baby girls. All human life is intrinsically valuable,” said Mark Tooley, president of the Institute on Religion and Democracy. “Years of research have revealed serious instability in societies with lopsided gender ratios. The devaluation of women results in increased sex trafficking and more frequent instances of sexual violence. Consensus against gender-selective abortion should be easy for churches. But where we should hear strong voices, there is mostly silence.”