

GOP Presidential Hopefuls Back 20-Week Abortion Ban

Some potential GOP presidential candidates are showing their support for a piece of controversial abortion legislation.

CBN News has obtained letters from many of them backing a bill that would ban abortions in America after 20 weeks, the halfway point of pregnancy.

It's commonly referred to as the "fetal pain bill" because of the prevailing medical opinion that an unborn baby can feel pain by then.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C. is the main sponsor of the bill.

"If you're telling parents to sing to the baby because they understand your voice, really should we be aborting a child at the stage of the pregnancy?" Graham asked.

"I don't want anybody carrying the Republican banner that doesn't get this. If you don't get this, then you're the extremist," he charged.

That's why Graham, along with pro-life groups like the Susan B. Anthony List and National Right to Life, are pressuring possible GOP presidential contenders to get behind the bill, even though many Democrats and pundits will consider it toxic.

The response so far?

"Great response," Graham said. "All the major candidates I think will be with us. I couldn't be more pleased."

In letters of support obtained by CBN News former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush calls the bill "humane" and "compassionate."

Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee said the effort is "pro-

life and pro-woman,” and Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal considers it “common sense.”

All told, letters and support came in from Bush, Jindal, Huckabee, along with Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, Sens. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., Rand Paul, R-Ky., Ted Cruz, R-Texas, and former Sen. Rick Santorum, R-Pa.

As for other potential Republican candidates, Texas Gov. Rick Perry signed a similar version of the bill in his state. And Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., supported the House version.

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie has yet to provide a letter.

Supporters say a law banning abortion after 20 weeks is long overdue. Currently, the United States is one of six other countries – North Korea, Canada, China, the Netherlands, Singapore, and Vietnam – that allow elective abortions after that point.

Polls show 55 percent of Americans think abortion should be banned after 20 weeks. And the number is even higher among women, with 60 percent saying it should be banned.

“This one has caught fire. This is wildly popular and it’s wildly popular certainly with pro-life people,” Susan B. Anthony List President Marjorie Dannenfelser said.

“Of course we want to protect those children, but it’s also very popular with Democratic women. It’s also popular with young people. It’s very popular with women. That’s called consensus,” she added.

But critics beg to differ. They reason that because Roe v. Wade is the law of the land, this bill won’t hold up constitutionally, arguing that the baby isn’t viable outside the womb until 22 weeks, not 20.

“Roe v. Wade says that the government has a compelling interest in protecting the unborn at medical viability. That’s

1973. A lot has changed since 1973," Graham said.

But what about the concern that pushing this bill will give Democrats more ammunition to peddle their campaign theme that Republicans are carrying out a war on women? Graham clearly welcomes the challenge.

"Bring it on. I want this debate," he said.

He could get it if Republicans take back the Senate in the upcoming midterm elections. Right now, the Senate Democratic leadership won't bring the bill up for a vote, even though it's already passed in the House and versions of it have passed in 13 states.

But if Republicans do win the Senate, the debate about what happens to an unborn baby in an abortion could be front and center once again.