

Pro-Life Blogger Details Protest and Arrest at Boehner's Office

Since the U.S. House of Representatives pulled the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act from consideration on Jan. 21—the evening before March for Life 2015—pro-life blogger Jill Stanek has been relentless in calling for the bill to come back to the House floor for a vote.

With the bill yet to be reintroduced two months later, Stanek felt the voice of pro-life activists was not being heard.

When she teamed up with Rev. Pat Mahoney of Christian Defense Coalition and Troy Newman of Operation Rescue to announce a Sit-in/Pray-in at Speaker John Boehner's Congressional office, within days the Speaker of the House responded.

Before the protest, Stanek agreed to an interview as her team met at Pete's Diner on Capitol Hill—a location they knew was one of Speaker Boehner's favorite spots for breakfast.

Within two hours, she was handcuffed and arrested by Capitol Police outside the Congressional office of Speaker Boehner along with seven other pro-life activists.

Bound4LIFE: What do you expect will happen today?

Jill Stanek: Pat Mahoney just spoke with the highest-ranking officer on the Capitol Police force, which is an indicator of how serious they are taking our protest.

Outside the Speaker's office, we'll explain our purpose with the protest; we each have a different purpose for being there. As a registered nurse, my purpose for being there has to do with my testimony of holding a 21-week-old abortion survivor until he died. He would have been saved by an abortion ban

such as this bill.

I'm upholding his memory and reminding these Republicans who are dithering for whatever reason—that while they do this, babies are dying excruciating deaths every day. Trying to reorient this discussion to the babies is my reason for talking.

I will speak, Pat [Mahoney] will speak, Troy [Newman] will speak, the three primary organizers. We'll either kneel or sit; we are told the arrest may happen rather quickly. *(Editor's note: approx. 20 activists were present at the protest, and eight pro-life leaders arrested.)*

Bound4LIFE: What do you hope to accomplish through today's demonstration?

Jill Stanek: We have two goals today. First of all, in our own way we want to pressure the GOP leadership in the House to present the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act for a vote.

From various sources on Capitol Hill, I have heard that we have already had an impact. There really wasn't any particular rush felt on this issue, and now there is.

The other goal is to reorient this discussion back to the babies, who are literally being drawn and quartered on a daily basis. People don't seem to have any sense of urgency about making that stop.

Bound4LIFE: Your team is billing this as a sit-in/pray-in. Why prayer?

Jill Stanek: That's what sets us apart from other protests. We are Christians first, called to defend the defenseless and be a voice for the voiceless.

This isn't a Sharpton-esque sort of venture; we are entering into this with a lot of thought and prayer.

Bound4LIFE: Let's rewind to June 2013. The U.S. House voted 228-196 to pass the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. Do you believe this was a milestone for the House, or was it only in response to media frenzy around Kermit Gosnell's House of Horrors?

Jill Stanek: The answer is yes. This bill was in the works, but the House felt it had the wind in its sails at that time. *The American public will be with us on this*, they saw.

Now they have a larger majority. They declare that they are pro-life. The January bill was an identical bill, so it should not have fallen apart.

In my remarks today, I'll speak about holding an aborted baby at Christ's Hospital in Illinois—the baby that became the reason for the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act, which was introduced in the Illinois State Legislature. As a state senator, Barack Obama voted against that bill four times.

You know, I expect that from Democrats. But we shouldn't expect Republicans to covertly block pro-life legislation—because they're afraid or not invested in the issue beyond simple "I'm pro-life" platitudes. Many of them are also not very cogent on life issues, as we've seen the past few years. Their job isn't just to introduce pro-life bills and vote on them: They have to sell the American people on why we value life.

If they haven't done anything on this at the three-month mark, on April 22 we are going to come back with a bigger crowd.

Bound4LIFE: As you are a medical professional, it's important to ask a question about rape—an issue that derailed this bill in January. This bill pertains to rape victims who would seek to receive an abortion after 20 weeks conception. Could you comment on this?

Jill Stanek: There's something that needs to be evaluated if

you have a mother who is 20 weeks pregnant, and all of a sudden decides she needs to get an abortion halfway through the pregnancy because the child's father is a rapist.

For instance, the mother may not have even known she was pregnant. We may be talking about a child here; I've actually taken care of an 11-year-old who came into the hospital 24 weeks pregnant and didn't know she was pregnant. She was a small girl and had been raped by her 18 year-old stepbrother. She didn't even know the facts of life.

The only reason that serial rape became known was because of her pregnancy. In the event of a 20-week pregnant woman suddenly making this decision, there have to be other factors at play.

This points to the necessity of having a reporting requirement: so that these victims can have their perpetrators prosecuted. Many of these victims are surely incest victims, or children raped by adult men—the only way they're going to get help is by going to the authorities.

The other reason to have a reporting requirement is that otherwise it's a loophole that anybody can use. Any abortionist who wants to receive several thousand dollars for providing this mother an abortion will have her check the box, *Due to rape*. He may not even ask her and fill out the paperwork himself.

If you don't have to have any evidence or reporting, any woman could use the rape exception to receive an abortion.

A reporting requirement is not just to help the victim herself, who could be rescued from serial rape against her. If we're dealing with a creepy Ted Bundy-type of criminal, and you're the first in a series of rapes he would be committing, reporting this rape helps save other victims from violence.

We should encourage women to do the right thing and report

their rape, not only for themselves but for other victims.

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 violent 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.

Bound4LIFE: House Leadership indicates the bill is in the process of being revised, to deal with issues that created negative backlash in January. How do you see this playing out?

Jill Stanek: There are two ways that it could turn out. There could be language introduced that removes the problems some Republican women have with it—they could remove the rape reporting requirement, but strengthen the bill in other ways.

Or, they could leave the rape reporting requirement in but create verbiage that somehow answers the concerns of some Republican women.

Another component of this is there have been no maternal health findings entered into this bill—in other words, the harm late-term abortions cause women. At 20 weeks development,

if you get an abortion the mortality rate for mothers spikes.

Including these findings in this bill would be helpful so Congressional leaders see the evidence and have something to present to the American public. *We are on the side of women and this hurts women*, they can say with certainty.

Josh M. Shepherd serves as Communications Manager at Bound4LIFE International, a grassroots movement to pray for the ending of abortion and for revival worldwide. Reprinted with permission from Bound4LIFE.