

# Unborn Babies Can't Carry Protest Signs

Thanks to a law passed in January in the state of New York, a woman can have an abortion up until the very moment of childbirth. And when that law was passed, lawmakers threw a party by covering the World Trade Center in New York City with celebratory pink lights.

Meanwhile a law passed this month in Georgia says it's a crime for a woman to get an abortion after six weeks of pregnancy, when a fetal heartbeat can be detected. As soon as this so-called Heartbeat Bill was passed, Hollywood directors, producers and actors including Rosie O'Donnell, Amy Schumer, Sean Penn and Alec Baldwin vowed to stop making their films in the state.

Welcome to 2019, the year when the already-polarizing issue of abortion threatens to split our nation in half.

So far this year, a dozen states have enacted restrictive abortion laws designed to challenge the 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling that legalized abortion. Aside from laws passed in Ohio, Missouri, Kentucky, Mississippi, Georgia and Louisiana, Alabama's governor signed a bill last week that not only limits abortion to the first six weeks of pregnancy but also outlaws abortions performed because of rape, incest or the health of the mother.

I personally believe the Alabama law goes way too far. No law can be considered "pro-life" if it doesn't also protect the life of the pregnant woman. And no woman should be forced to carry a baby if a man forced himself on her.

But I have a difficult time understanding why our nation is so determined to deny unborn children the right to life. America has a history of defending the rights of women, slaves, child

workers, oppressed laborers, marginalized races, poor immigrants and gay people—not to mention whales, sea turtles and other endangered species. Yet today we pass laws that allow mothers to kill full-term infants—and we pat ourselves on the back for being “progressive.”

Before New York passed the Reproductive Health Act in January, any abortion after the 12th week of pregnancy had to be performed in a hospital, and any abortion after 20 weeks had to be overseen by a physician in case the infant was born alive. Under the new law there are no such requirements. The law is silent on the issue of a baby born alive.

New York’s law effectively rules that unborn babies are not really human beings until they emerge from the womb and take a breath. Until that moment, there is an open season on them. You can kill at will.

And this is what abortion proponents hope will be the law in all 50 states. They want unlimited, wholesale elimination of unwanted “fetal tissue.”

I don’t expect that my Christian convictions on this topic will convince the most militant abortion activists to change their opinions. They will keep marching with signs that say, “Get Your Laws Off My Uterus.” (And besides, they don’t think I have any say in this matter since I’m a man.) But I will always maintain—regardless of what the Supreme Court rules—that an unborn life also has rights.

I was in high school when Roe v. Wade was enacted. Yet even at age 15, I understood that a fetus is a life in formation and that it deserves protection. I don’t know at exactly what week in gestation it can be considered a legal person. (Is it when a heartbeat is detected? Is it when fingers and fingerprints are developed?) But I do know that it is sinister to kill an unborn baby just before it emerges from the womb.

The Bible is clear that an unborn life has unique value and

purpose. David wrote: "You brought my inner parts into being; You wove me in my mother's womb. I will praise you, for You made me with fear and wonder" (Ps. 139:13-14a). The psalmist understood that God's hand is involved in the miracle of gestation—and that this alone makes an unborn life sacred.

God also told Jeremiah: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I sanctified you, and I ordained you a prophet to the nations" (Jer. 1:5). From this passage we derive a clear understanding that an unborn life is so much more than a glob of cells; a baby in the womb carries a God-given destiny.

In this divisive season, I hope we will all search our hearts. Amid today's clamor for "reproductive rights," we need to ask if unborn children have any say in this debate. They cannot carry protest signs, stage rallies or shout questions during congressional hearings. They have been trampled. But if we could hear their muffled cries, I believe they would be saying, "Please let us live."