

How Can Attorneys Possibly Defend Gosnell's Sick Abortion Practice?

The opening of the defense case in the high-profile murder trial of a Philadelphia abortion doctor was delayed on Monday after his attorney suffered an illness, a court official said.

Dr. Kermit Gosnell's attorney, Jack McMahon, was sidelined with a chest ailment on Monday but was expected to begin calling witnesses on Tuesday as he mounts his defense, a court clerk said. Prosecutors rested their case on Thursday.

Gosnell is charged with eight counts of murder in the deaths of a female patient and seven infants who prosecutors say lived through abortion procedures but had their spinal cords severed by Gosnell. He could face the death penalty if convicted.

The doctor has been in jail since he was charged in January 2011 after a grand jury probe. He is on trial on 26 charges, including the eight counts of murder.

The case has rekindled the debate in the United States about late-term abortions. Under Pennsylvania law, abortions can be performed up to 24 weeks.

McMahon has declined to say whether Gosnell will testify in the case, which opened on March 18.

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