

U.S. House Passes Bill to Support the Sanctity of Human Life

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As the nation prepares to celebrate the annual National Sanctity of Human Life Day on Jan. 22, 2023, the 118th U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill which mandates life-saving measures for babies that are born alive after an abortion, and another bill condemning the recent attacks on pro-life facilities, groups and churches.

The House passed 220-210 HR 26, known as the “Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act,” sponsored by Rep. Ann Wagner (R-MO). All Republican members voted in favor of the bill. Two Democrats, Reps. Henry Cuellar and Vicente Gonzalez, both of South Texas, also voted in favor of the bill and “present,” respectively.

The bill would require abortion facilities and medical providers to treat babies born alive after a failed abortion with the same level of care as they would any other newborn. If an abortion results in the live birth of an infant, the child is considered a legal person for all purposes under the laws of the United States and is entitled to all the protections of such laws.

The bill states, “Any health care practitioner present at the time the child is born alive shall (A) exercise the same degree of professional skill, care and diligence to preserve the life and health of the child as a reasonably diligent and conscientious health care practitioner would render to any other child born alive at the same gestational age; and (B) following the exercise of skill, care and diligence required under subparagraph (A), ensure that the child born alive is

immediately transported and admitted to a hospital.”

HR 26 also adds penalties for medical providers that do not comply, and they could be subject to civil liability and criminal charges. For example, the bill specifies that “to prohibit a health care practitioner from failing to exercise the proper degree of care in the case of a child who survives an abortion or attempted abortion shall be fined under this title or imprisoned for not more than five years, or both.”

More than 30,000 medical professionals from the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American College of Pediatricians, Christian Medical & Dental Associations, Catholic Medical Association and Association of American Physicians and Surgeons support the “Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act” by stating, “There is no scientific or legal reason to distinguish between human beings born after an attempted abortion and human beings born after attempted live birth. In cases where the mother’s life actually is in danger in the latter half of pregnancy, there is not time for an abortion... We can, and do, save the life of the mother through delivery of an intact infant in a hospital where both the mother and her newborn can receive the care that they need. There is no medical reason to intentionally kill that fetal human being.”

Abortion survivors are not “hypothetical.” The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports that at least 143 babies were born alive after an attempted abortion between 2003 and 2014—a number derived from only the eight states that report this information.

In addition, during the preliminary criminal hearing for Liberty Counsel’s client Sandra Merritt, the undercover journalist who exposed Planned Parenthood’s trade in baby body parts, an expert in stem cell research testified that various studies involving baby human hearts had to have been conducted while the hearts were still beating when cut out. In other

words, the babies had to have been born alive.

Yesterday, the House also approved Con. Res. 3, which condemns the recent attacks on pro-life facilities, groups and churches in the wake of the leak of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision on May 2, 2022, and the release on June 24, 2022, of the final decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*.

The resolution passed 222-209 with three Democrats, Reps. Vicente Gonzalez (TX), Chrissy Houlahan (PA) and Marie Perez (WA) voting in favor of it.

Con. Res. 3 specifies that "radical anti-life advocates initiated a pressure campaign designed to influence the Supreme Court's opinion" and "defaced, vandalized and caused destruction to over 100 pro-life facilities, groups and churches." As a result, the resolution "calls upon the Biden Administration to use all appropriate law enforcement authorities to uphold public safety and to protect the rights of pro-life facilities, groups and churches."

 Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) cited the cost of damages to some of the centers that were attacked last year ranged from less than \$100 to more than \$250,000 and three churches were set on fire.

Liberty Counsel Founder and Chairman Mat Staver said, "I applaud these House members for protecting the lives of precious babies that have survived an abortion and are fighting for life. Now the Senate needs to pass the bill to end infanticide. If this protection is not implemented, the abortion provider simply backs away from the table and leaves the baby to suffer and die. We must continue to fight for the preborn and newborn and restore a culture of life in this nation. We must make the womb a safe place once again in America." {eo}

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