

VOTE SET ON SHIELDING UNBORN FROM PAIN

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a bill that is expected to be voted on this week by the House:

The House is set to vote on the "Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act." The bill would make it illegal for anyone to perform, or attempt to perform, an abortion after 20 weeks of pregnancy; it allows exceptions for rape, incest, or to save the life of the mother. A similar measure won House approval in 2015 but failed in the Senate. President Trump has pledged to sign it if it reaches his desk.

Cardinal Timothy Dolan, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, sent a letter to House members last week saying, "All decent and humane people are repulsed by the callous and barbarous treatment of women and children in clinics...that abort children after 20 weeks." He labeled the 20-week ban a "common-sense reform."

The Catholic League commends Cardinal Dolan for his leadership on this matter; we strongly support the legislation. The question is why any rational person would oppose it. Curiously, those who do oppose it offer almost nothing in support of their position.

The Feminist Majority Foundation put out a statement against the bill last week, but never once took up the central question of fetal pain. The best the National Organization for Women could do was to quote one doctor who said fetal pain was "not likely." Which means he is conceding that unborn babies at 20 weeks *may* feel pain.

When in doubt, why would any rational person not play it safe and support the bill *in the event the baby can feel pain?*

NARAL Pro-Choice America and Planned Parenthood also fail to come to grips with the issue of fetal pain. In both cases, they fall back on the argument that abortions after the first trimester are “relatively small.” That resolves nothing. Indeed, it dodges the issue: What about the likelihood that an unborn baby *can feel* the sting of a projectile, one that is designed, of course, to kill him or her.

Cardinal Dolan’s appeal to common sense finds support in the medical practices that accompany fetal surgery: the unborn child is administered anesthesia. Every honest person knows why. That alone should convince those who are on the fence to cast their vote in favor of this bill.