

May 13, 2014

Good afternoon Senator Graham, Senator McConnell and fellow advocates for life. I thank you for taking a stance on this important issue.

One year ago today, abortionist Kermit Gosnell was convicted of 3 counts of first-degree murder and 21 felony counts of illegal late abortion. The babies that Gosnell brutally killed outside the womb, *felt pain*. Millions of late-term babies at risk of currently being aborted will experience the same excruciating pain while still in the womb, if aborted.

On behalf of the Family Research Council and the families we represent, I urge Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid to allow a vote on the "Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act". This bill prohibits late abortion of pain-capable unborn babies after 20 weeks post-fertilization.

I am standing here today to share with you what embryology textbooks and peer-reviewed scientific studies have unequivocally proven: babies at 20 weeks post-fertilization can *perceive* and experience pain. This is a matter of biology, not a matter of belief or wishful thinking.

Connections between the spinal cord and the thalamus, the region of the brain associated with *pain perception* in both the unborn child and the adult, begin to form around 12 weeks and are completed by 18 weeks post-fertilization.

Doctors routinely administer anesthesia for in-utero surgeries of babies at 20 weeks post-fertilization. Why would medical textbooks and professional anesthesiologists already have come to a general consensus that fetal anesthesia and analgesia are warranted for fetal surgical procedures, were it not for the presence and experience of *pain* in these tiniest of patients?

Unborn babies 20 weeks post-fertilization have a heightened sense of pain. Between 20 and 30 weeks post-fertilization, an unborn child has more pain receptors per square inch of skin than at any other time in his or her life, with only a very thin layer of skin for protection, leaving nerve fibers closer to the surface. Mechanisms that inhibit or moderate the experience of pain do not begin to develop until 32 to 34 weeks post-fertilization. Any pain the unborn child experiences is likely more intense than the pain an older infant or adult experiences when subjected to similar types of injury.

The American people are with us! A January 2014 Marist poll found that 84% of Americans believe abortion should be restricted (within the first three months of pregnancy, in cases of rape, incest, or to save the life of the mother) or never allowed at all.

It is barbaric and cruel to expose unborn children 20 weeks post-fertilization and older to a procedure that causes severe pain.

I urge Sen. Reid to bring the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act to the floor for a vote.

These unborn babies deserve no less.

Thank you.

Arina Grossu