



Seeking protection for the unborn

By Janet Porter - - Tuesday, February 13, 2018

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There is a bill that will protect more human lives than any bill ever passed in Congress. It has 170 co-sponsors. It is supported by hundreds of national pro-life organizations and leaders. But there is one group standing in the way of the bill which will protect millions of unborn babies — the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC).

The bill? H.R. 490, the Heartbeat Bill. It will protect every child whose heartbeat can be detected.

Why would National Right to Life oppose the bill that would most closely accomplish its mission to “to protect and defend the right to life of every innocent human being?”

Allow me to share what I’ve learned. For the last eight years, I have worked to pass Heartbeat Bills, beginning in Ohio where God first put the idea in my heart. The idea came to me at the wake of my friend Mark Lally, former president of Ohio Right to Life. As I stood at his wake I realized, he worked his entire life to end abortion, but never lived to see it.

You see, I served as legislative director of Ohio Right to Life for nearly a decade and worked to pass the Woman’s Right to Know Act, parental consent, fetal homicide, and the nation’s first ban on partial birth abortion. But, as Dr. Jack Willke, the founder of both National and Ohio Right to Life said, the incremental approach “did not get us far enough fast enough.” He, too, died without seeing his lifelong dream of ending abortion.

With a body count of 60 million innocent children, it’s time we realize that 45 years of microscopic incrementalism has been a catastrophic failure.

So, to get different results, we tried something different. In December 2010, I recruited a team of experts to draft the first Heartbeat Bill. The team member who authored the first draft, of the first Heartbeat Bill was John Jakubczyk, a board member of National Right to Life. We introduced the Ohio Heartbeat Bill the week of Valentine’s Day, 2011, and it passed the House in June of that year. But guess who fought the Heartbeat Bill harder than the abortion lobby? Ohio Right to Life. Ohio Right to Life lobbied harder than Planned Parenthood against the bill which would protect more children than every other pro-life bill combined, blocking it in the Senate for six long years. I was there when Ohio Right to Life stood right next to Planned Parenthood and NARAL testifying against our bill to keep hearts beating. And in 2016, when we finally passed the Heartbeat Bill in both the House and Senate, Ohio Right to Life actually called for a veto of the nation’s most protective pro-life bill.

When Gov. John Kasich heartlessly vetoed our bill that would have protected 20,000 Ohio lives each year, Ohio Right to Life joined the abortionists in celebrating. The equivalent of a stadium full of innocent lives would be brutally killed, but Ohio Right to Life was happy about it. You’ve heard of fake news, but allow me to introduce you to a “fake pro-life group” — uh, make that fake pro-life groups.

The rationale? Kill the bill — and the babies — because the court might kill it, or the National Right to

Life approach: “We better not try because we might fail.” Maybe that’s why, after 45 years of fighting this battle, we still legally kill nearly a million babies every year.

Like their fake state organization, National Right to Life claims that the Court “could give us a bad precedent.” They must have forgotten that when I lobbied to pass NRLC’s first ban on Partial Birth Abortion, people said the same thing — “the court will say no.” And the 6th Circuit Court did say no. In 2000, the Supreme Court said no to the Nebraska version. Was it the end of the world? Did we just give up and go away? No. Like the “persistent widow,” 30 states kept knocking, and the congressional version of our partial birth abortion ban was upheld by the Supreme Court seven years later.

NRLC points to the 8th Circuit Court ruling, which was bound by precedent to strike down the Arkansas and North Dakota Heartbeat Laws. What they don’t tell you is that the Appellate Court begged the Supreme Court to review their decision since a heartbeat is a “more consistent and certain marker than viability,” the Supreme Court’s current arbitrary and unscientific standard to allow legal protection.

NRLC also says “It won’t pass in the Senate.” Funny, that didn’t stop them from passing the “Born Alive” bill (which won’t prevent a single abortion), or the “Pain Capable” 5-month bill, which just failed in the Senate. By the way, the Pain Capable bill failed in the Senate with 51 votes — precisely the amount of votes actually needed to pass it, if the Senate would only wave their self-imposed “60-vote rule,” which they do whenever they really want to pass something. It’s the do-nothing “60-vote rule” NRLC should be fighting, not the bill that will protect babies with beating hearts.

National Right to Life needs to either change their actions or change their name. And NRLC donors need to change their charity.

Speaker Ryan, Majority Leader McCarthy, leadership and Judiciary Chairman Goodlatte, now have a choice to make: Either protect “the movement,” or protect the babies.

Hopefully, they will follow the courageous leadership of Rep. Steve King, his 170 Heartbeat Bill co-sponsors, hundreds of pro-life organizations and leaders, and the pro-life people who elected them, to save millions of lives.

With a pro-life House, Senate, White House and pro-life Supreme Court judges on the way, it’s time to actually do what we’ve been marching about.

- *Janet Porter is president and founder of Faith2Action, and author of the pro-life Heartbeat Bill.*