

112TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 3803

To amend title 18, United States Code, to protect pain-capable unborn children in the District of Columbia, and for other purposes.

---

## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 23, 2012

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona (for himself, Mr. AKIN, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. FLEMING, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. HUELSKAMP, Mr. PITTS, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. KINGSTON, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. SOUTHERLAND, Mrs. SCHMIDT, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. PENCE, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. ROSS of Florida, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. HERGER, Mr. CANSECO, Mr. LANKFORD, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. NUNNELEE, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. JONES, Mr. LANDRY, Mr. BACHUS, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mrs. ROBY, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. KELLY, Mr. GOWDY, Mr. JORDAN, Mrs. BACHMANN, Mrs. ELLMERS, Mr. AMASH, Mr. ISSA, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, and Mr. SCALISE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

---

## A BILL

To amend title 18, United States Code, to protect pain-capable unborn children in the District of Columbia, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “District of Columbia  
3 Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds and declares the following:

6 (1) Pain receptors (nociceptors) are present  
7 throughout the unborn child’s entire body and  
8 nerves link these receptors to the brain’s thalamus  
9 and subcortical plate by no later than 20 weeks after  
10 fertilization.

11 (2) By 8 weeks after fertilization, the unborn  
12 child reacts to touch. After 20 weeks, the unborn  
13 child reacts to stimuli that would be recognized as  
14 painful if applied to an adult human, for example,  
15 by recoiling.

16 (3) In the unborn child, application of such  
17 painful stimuli is associated with significant in-  
18 creases in stress hormones known as the stress re-  
19 sponse.

20 (4) Subjection to such painful stimuli is associ-  
21 ated with long-term harmful neurodevelopmental ef-  
22 fects, such as altered pain sensitivity and, possibly,  
23 emotional, behavioral, and learning disabilities later  
24 in life.

25 (5) For the purposes of surgery on unborn chil-  
26 dren, fetal anesthesia is routinely administered and

1 is associated with a decrease in stress hormones  
2 compared to their level when painful stimuli are ap-  
3 plied without such anesthesia.

4 (6) The position, asserted by some medical ex-  
5 perts, that the unborn child is incapable of experi-  
6 encing pain until a point later in pregnancy than 20  
7 weeks after fertilization predominately rests on the  
8 assumption that the ability to experience pain de-  
9 pends on the cerebral cortex and requires nerve con-  
10 nections between the thalamus and the cortex. How-  
11 ever, recent medical research and analysis, especially  
12 since 2007, provides strong evidence for the conclu-  
13 sion that a functioning cortex is not necessary to ex-  
14 perience pain.

15 (7) Substantial evidence indicates that children  
16 born missing the bulk of the cerebral cortex, those  
17 with hydranencephaly, nevertheless experience pain.

18 (8) In adult humans and in animals, stimula-  
19 tion or ablation of the cerebral cortex does not alter  
20 pain perception, while stimulation or ablation of the  
21 thalamus does.

22 (9) Substantial evidence indicates that struc-  
23 tures used for pain processing in early development  
24 differ from those of adults, using different neural  
25 elements available at specific times during develop-

1       ment, such as the subcortical plate, to fulfill the role  
2       of pain processing.

3           (10) The position, asserted by some commenta-  
4       tors, that the unborn child remains in a coma-like  
5       sleep state that precludes the unborn child experi-  
6       encing pain is inconsistent with the documented re-  
7       action of unborn children to painful stimuli and with  
8       the experience of fetal surgeons who have found it  
9       necessary to sedate the unborn child with anesthesia  
10      to prevent the unborn child from engaging in vig-  
11      orous movement in reaction to invasive surgery.

12          (11) Consequently, there is substantial medical  
13      evidence that an unborn child is capable of experi-  
14      encing pain at least by 20 weeks after fertilization,  
15      if not earlier.

16          (12) It is the purpose of the Congress to assert  
17      a compelling governmental interest in protecting the  
18      lives of unborn children from the stage at which sub-  
19      stantial medical evidence indicates that they are ca-  
20      pable of feeling pain.

21          (13) The compelling governmental interest in  
22      protecting the lives of unborn children from the  
23      stage at which substantial medical evidence indicates  
24      that they are capable of feeling pain is intended to  
25      be separate from and independent of the compelling

1 governmental interest in protecting the lives of un-  
2 born children from the stage of viability, and neither  
3 governmental interest is intended to replace the  
4 other.

5 (14) The District Council of the District of Co-  
6 lumbia, operating under authority delegated by Con-  
7 gress, repealed all limitations on abortion at any  
8 stage of pregnancy, effective April 29, 2004.

9 (15) Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of  
10 the United States of America provides that the Con-  
11 gress shall “exercise exclusive Legislation in all  
12 Cases whatsoever” over the District established as  
13 the seat of government of the United States, now  
14 known as the District of Columbia. The constitu-  
15 tional responsibility for the protection of pain-capable  
16 unborn children within the Federal District re-  
17 sides with the Congress.

18 **SEC. 3. DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PAIN-CAPABLE UNBORN**

19 **CHILD PROTECTION.**

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 74 of title 18, United  
21 States Code, is amended by inserting after section 1531  
22 the following:

1 **“§ 1532. District of Columbia pain-capable unborn**  
2 **child protection**

3 “(a) UNLAWFUL CONDUCT.—Notwithstanding any  
4 other provision of law, including any legislation of the Dis-  
5 trict of Columbia under authority delegated by Congress,  
6 it shall be unlawful for any person to perform an abortion  
7 within the District of Columbia, or attempt to do so, un-  
8 less in conformity with the requirements set forth in sub-  
9 section (b).

10 “(b) REQUIREMENTS FOR ABORTIONS.—

11 “(1) The physician performing or attempting  
12 the abortion shall first make a determination of the  
13 probable post-fertilization age of the unborn child or  
14 reasonably rely upon such a determination made by  
15 another physician. In making such a determination,  
16 the physician shall make such inquiries of the preg-  
17 nant woman and perform or cause to be performed  
18 such medical examinations and tests as a reasonably  
19 prudent physician, knowledgeable about the case and  
20 the medical conditions involved, would consider nec-  
21 essary to make an accurate determination of post-  
22 fertilization age.

23 “(2)(A) Except as provided in subparagraph  
24 (B), the abortion shall not be performed or at-  
25 tempted, if the probable post-fertilization age, as de-

1       terminated under paragraph (1), of the unborn child  
2       is 20 weeks or greater.

3               “(B) Subject to subparagraph (C), subpara-  
4       graph (A) does not apply if, in reasonable medical  
5       judgment, the abortion is necessary to save the life  
6       of a pregnant woman whose life is endangered by a  
7       physical disorder, physical illness, or physical injury,  
8       including a life-endangering physical condition  
9       caused by or arising from the pregnancy itself, but  
10      not including psychological or emotional conditions  
11      or any claim or diagnosis that the woman will en-  
12      gage in conduct which she intends to result in her  
13      death.

14              “(C) A physician terminating or attempting to  
15      terminate a pregnancy under the exception provided  
16      by subparagraph (B) may do so only in the manner  
17      which, in reasonable medical judgment, provides the  
18      best opportunity for the unborn child to survive, un-  
19      less, in reasonable medical judgment, termination of  
20      the pregnancy in that manner would pose a greater  
21      risk of—

22                      “(i) the death of the pregnant woman; or

23                      “(ii) the substantial and irreversible phys-  
24                      ical impairment of a major bodily function, not

1 including psychological or emotional conditions,  
2 of the pregnant woman;  
3 than would other available methods.

4 “(c) CRIMINAL PENALTY.—Whoever violates sub-  
5 section (a) shall be fined under this title or imprisoned  
6 for not more than 2 years, or both.

7 “(d) BAR TO PROSECUTION.—A woman upon whom  
8 an abortion in violation of subsection (a) is performed or  
9 attempted may not be prosecuted under, or for a con-  
10 spiracy to violate, subsection (a), or for an offense under  
11 section 2, 3, or 4 based on such a violation.

12 “(e) CIVIL REMEDIES.—

13 “(1) CIVIL ACTION BY WOMAN ON WHOM THE  
14 ABORTION IS PERFORMED.—A woman upon whom  
15 an abortion has been performed or attempted in vio-  
16 lation of subsection (a), may in a civil action against  
17 any person who engaged in the violation obtain ap-  
18 propriate relief.

19 “(2) CIVIL ACTION BY RELATIVES.—The father  
20 of an unborn child who is the subject of an abortion  
21 performed or attempted in violation of subsection  
22 (a), or a maternal grandparent of the unborn child  
23 if the pregnant woman is an unemancipated minor,  
24 may in a civil action against any person who en-  
25 gaged in the violation, obtain appropriate relief, un-

1 less the pregnancy resulted from the plaintiff's  
2 criminal conduct or the plaintiff consented to the  
3 abortion.

4 “(3) APPROPRIATE RELIEF.—Appropriate relief  
5 in a civil action under this subsection includes—

6 “(A) objectively verifiable money damages  
7 for all injuries, psychological and physical, occa-  
8 sioned by the violation of this section;

9 “(B) statutory damages equal to three  
10 times the cost of the abortion; and

11 “(C) punitive damages.

12 “(4) INJUNCTIVE RELIEF.—

13 “(A) IN GENERAL.—A qualified plaintiff  
14 may in a civil action obtain injunctive relief to  
15 prevent an abortion provider from performing  
16 or attempting further abortions in violation of  
17 this section.

18 “(B) DEFINITION.—In this paragraph the  
19 term ‘qualified plaintiff’ means—

20 “(i) a woman upon whom an abortion  
21 is performed or attempted in violation of  
22 this section;

23 “(ii) any person who is the spouse,  
24 parent, sibling or guardian of, or a current

1 or former licensed health care provider of,  
2 that woman; or

3 “(iii) the United States Attorney for  
4 the District of Columbia.

5 “(5) ATTORNEYS FEES FOR PLAINTIFF.—The  
6 court shall award a reasonable attorney’s fee as part  
7 of the costs to a prevailing plaintiff in a civil action  
8 under this subsection.

9 “(6) ATTORNEYS FEES FOR DEFENDANT.—If a  
10 defendant in a civil action under this section prevails  
11 and the court finds that the plaintiff’s suit was friv-  
12 olous and brought in bad faith, the court shall also  
13 render judgment for a reasonable attorney’s fee in  
14 favor of the defendant against the plaintiff.

15 “(7) AWARDS AGAINST WOMAN.—Except under  
16 paragraph (6), in a civil action under this sub-  
17 section, no damages, attorney’s fee or other mone-  
18 tary relief may be assessed against the woman upon  
19 whom the abortion was performed or attempted.

20 “(f) PROTECTION OF PRIVACY IN COURT PRO-  
21 CEEDINGS.—

22 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Except to the extent the  
23 Constitution or other similarly compelling reason re-  
24 quires, in every civil or criminal action under this  
25 section, the court shall make such orders as are nec-

1        essary to protect the anonymity of any woman upon  
2        whom an abortion has been performed or attempted  
3        if she does not give her written consent to such dis-  
4        closure. Such orders may be made upon motion, but  
5        shall be made sua sponte if not otherwise sought by  
6        a party.

7            “(2) ORDERS TO PARTIES, WITNESSES, AND  
8        COUNSEL.—The court shall issue appropriate orders  
9        under paragraph (1) to the parties, witnesses, and  
10       counsel and shall direct the sealing of the record and  
11       exclusion of individuals from courtrooms or hearing  
12       rooms to the extent necessary to safeguard her iden-  
13       tity from public disclosure. Each such order shall be  
14       accompanied by specific written findings explaining  
15       why the anonymity of the woman must be preserved  
16       from public disclosure, why the order is essential to  
17       that end, how the order is narrowly tailored to serve  
18       that interest, and why no reasonable less restrictive  
19       alternative exists.

20            “(3) PSEUDONYM REQUIRED.—In the absence  
21        of written consent of the woman upon whom an  
22        abortion has been performed or attempted, any  
23        party, other than a public official, who brings an ac-  
24        tion under paragraphs (1), (2), or (4) of subsection  
25        (e) shall do so under a pseudonym.

1           “(4) LIMITATION.—This subsection shall not be  
2 construed to conceal the identity of the plaintiff or  
3 of witnesses from the defendant or from attorneys  
4 for the defendant.

5           “(g) REPORTING.—

6           “(1) DUTY TO REPORT.—Any physician who  
7 performs or attempts an abortion within the District  
8 of Columbia shall report that abortion to the rel-  
9 evant District of Columbia health agency (herein-  
10 after in this section referred to as the ‘health agen-  
11 cy’) on a schedule and in accordance with forms and  
12 regulations prescribed by the health agency.

13           “(2) CONTENTS OF REPORT.—The report shall  
14 include the following:

15           “(A) POST-FERTILIZATION AGE.—For the  
16 determination of probable postfertilization age  
17 of the unborn child, whether ultrasound was  
18 employed in making the determination, and the  
19 week of probable post-fertilization age that was  
20 determined.

21           “(B) METHOD OF ABORTION.—Which of  
22 the following methods or combination of meth-  
23 ods was employed:

1           “(i) Dilation, dismemberment, and  
2           evacuation of fetal parts also known as ‘di-  
3           lation and evacuation’.

4           “(ii) Intra-amniotic instillation of sa-  
5           line, urea, or other substance (specify sub-  
6           stance) to kill the unborn child, followed by  
7           induction of labor.

8           “(iii) Intracardiac or other intra-fetal  
9           injection of digoxin, potassium chloride, or  
10          other substance (specify substance) in-  
11          tended to kill the unborn child, followed by  
12          induction of labor.

13          “(iv) Partial-birth abortion, as defined  
14          in section 1531.

15          “(v) Manual vacuum aspiration with-  
16          out other methods.

17          “(vi) Electrical vacuum aspiration  
18          without other methods.

19          “(vii) Abortion induced by use of  
20          mifepristone in combination with  
21          misoprostol; or

22          “(viii) if none of the methods de-  
23          scribed in the other clauses of this sub-  
24          paragraph was employed, whatever method  
25          was employed.

1           “(C) AGE OF WOMAN.—The age or approx-  
2           imate age of the pregnant woman.

3           “(D) COMPLIANCE WITH REQUIREMENTS  
4           FOR EXCEPTION.—The facts relied upon and  
5           the basis for any determinations required to es-  
6           tablish compliance with the requirements for  
7           the exception provided by subsection (b)(2).

8           “(3) EXCLUSIONS FROM REPORTS.—

9           “(A) A report required under this sub-  
10          section shall not contain the name or the ad-  
11          dress of the woman whose pregnancy was ter-  
12          minated, nor shall the report contain any other  
13          information identifying the woman.

14          “(B) Such report shall contain a unique  
15          Medical Record Number, to enable matching  
16          the report to the woman’s medical records.

17          “(C) Such reports shall be maintained in  
18          strict confidence by the health agency, shall not  
19          be available for public inspection, and shall not  
20          be made available except—

21                  “(i) to the United States Attorney for  
22                  the District of Columbia or that Attorney’s  
23                  delegate for a criminal investigation or a  
24                  civil investigation of conduct that may vio-  
25                  late this section; or

1                   “(ii) pursuant to court order in an ac-  
2                   tion under subsection (e).

3                   “(4) PUBLIC REPORT.—Not later than June 30  
4                   of each year beginning after the date of enactment  
5                   of this paragraph, the health agency shall issue a  
6                   public report providing statistics for the previous  
7                   calendar year compiled from all of the reports made  
8                   to the health agency under this subsection for that  
9                   year for each of the items listed in paragraph (2).  
10                  The report shall also provide the statistics for all  
11                  previous calendar years during which this section  
12                  was in effect, adjusted to reflect any additional in-  
13                  formation from late or corrected reports. The health  
14                  agency shall take care to ensure that none of the in-  
15                  formation included in the public reports could rea-  
16                  sonably lead to the identification of any pregnant  
17                  woman upon whom an abortion was performed or at-  
18                  tempted.

19                  “(5) FAILURE TO SUBMIT REPORT.—

20                  “(A) LATE FEE.—Any physician who fails  
21                  to submit a report not later than 30 days after  
22                  the date that report is due shall be subject to  
23                  a late fee of \$1,000 for each additional 30-day  
24                  period or portion of a 30-day period the report  
25                  is overdue.

1           “(B) COURT ORDER TO COMPLY.—A court  
2 of competent jurisdiction may, in a civil action  
3 commenced by the health agency, direct any  
4 physician whose report under this subsection is  
5 still not filed as required, or is incomplete, more  
6 than 180 days after the date the report was  
7 due, to comply with the requirements of this  
8 section under penalty of civil contempt.

9           “(C) DISCIPLINARY ACTION.—Intentional  
10 or reckless failure by any physician to comply  
11 with any requirement of this subsection, other  
12 than late filing of a report, constitutes suffi-  
13 cient cause for any disciplinary sanction which  
14 the Health Professional Licensing Administra-  
15 tion of the District of Columbia determines is  
16 appropriate, including suspension or revocation  
17 of any license granted by the Administration.

18           “(6) FORMS AND REGULATIONS.—Not later  
19 than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this  
20 section, the health agency shall prescribe forms and  
21 regulations to assist in compliance with this sub-  
22 section.

23           “(7) EFFECTIVE DATE OF REQUIREMENT.—  
24 Paragraph (1) of this subsection takes effect with  
25 respect to all abortions performed on and after the

1 first day of the first calendar month beginning after  
2 the effective date of such forms and regulations.

3 “(h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section the following  
4 definitions apply:

5 “(1) ABORTION.—The term ‘abortion’ means  
6 the use or prescription of any instrument, medicine,  
7 drug, or any other substance or device—

8 “(A) to intentionally kill the unborn child  
9 of a woman known to be pregnant; or

10 “(B) to otherwise intentionally terminate  
11 the pregnancy of a woman known to be preg-  
12 nant with an intention other than to increase  
13 the probability of a live birth, to preserve the  
14 life or health of the child after live birth, or to  
15 remove a dead unborn child who died as the re-  
16 sult of natural causes in utero, accidental trau-  
17 ma, or a criminal assault on the pregnant  
18 woman or her unborn child, and which causes  
19 the premature termination of the pregnancy.

20 “(2) ATTEMPT AN ABORTION.—The term ‘at-  
21 tempt’, with respect to an abortion, means conduct  
22 that, under the circumstances as the actor believes  
23 them to be, constitutes a substantial step in a course  
24 of conduct planned to culminate in performing an  
25 abortion in the District of Columbia.

1           “(3) FERTILIZATION.—The term ‘fertilization’  
2 means the fusion of human spermatozoon with a  
3 human ovum.

4           “(4) HEALTH AGENCY.—The term ‘health  
5 agency’ means the Department of Health of the Dis-  
6 trict of Columbia or any successor agency respon-  
7 sible for the regulation of medical practice.

8           “(5) PERFORM.—The term ‘perform’, with re-  
9 spect to an abortion, includes induce an abortion  
10 through a medical or chemical intervention including  
11 writing a prescription for a drug or device intended  
12 to result in an abortion.

13           “(6) PHYSICIAN.—The term ‘physician’ means  
14 a person licensed to practice medicine and surgery  
15 or osteopathic medicine and surgery, or otherwise li-  
16 censed to legally perform an abortion.

17           “(7) POST-FERTILIZATION AGE.—The term  
18 ‘post-fertilization age’ means the age of the unborn  
19 child as calculated from the fusion of a human  
20 spermatozoon with a human ovum.

21           “(8) PROBABLE POST-FERTILIZATION AGE OF  
22 THE UNBORN CHILD.—The term ‘probable post-fer-  
23 tilization age of the unborn child’ means what, in  
24 reasonable medical judgment, will with reasonable  
25 probability be the postfertilization age of the unborn

1 child at the time the abortion is planned to be per-  
2 formed or induced.

3 “(9) REASONABLE MEDICAL JUDGMENT.—The  
4 term ‘reasonable medical judgment’ means a medical  
5 judgment that would be made by a reasonably pru-  
6 dent physician, knowledgeable about the case and  
7 the treatment possibilities with respect to the med-  
8 ical conditions involved.

9 “(10) UNBORN CHILD.—The term ‘unborn  
10 child’ means an individual organism of the species  
11 homo sapiens, beginning at fertilization, until the  
12 point of being born alive as defined in section 8(b)  
13 of title 1.

14 “(11) UNEMANCIPATED MINOR.—The term  
15 ‘unemancipated minor’ means a minor who is sub-  
16 ject to the control, authority, and supervision of a  
17 parent or guardian, as determined under the law of  
18 the State in which the minor resides.

19 “(12) WOMAN.—The term ‘woman’ means a fe-  
20 male human being whether or not she has reached  
21 the age of majority.”.

22 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections  
23 at the beginning of chapter 74 of title 18, United States  
24 Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new  
25 item:

“1532. District of Columbia pain-capable unborn child protection.”.

1 (c) CHAPTER HEADING AMENDMENTS.—

2 (1) CHAPTER HEADING IN CHAPTER.—The  
3 chapter heading for chapter 74 of title 18, United  
4 States Code, is amended by striking “**PARTIAL**  
5 **BIRTH ABORTIONS**” and inserting “**ABOR-**  
6 **TIONS**”.

7 (2) TABLE OF CHAPTERS FOR PART I.—The  
8 item relating to chapter 74 in the table of chapters  
9 at the beginning of part I of title 18, United States  
10 Code, is amended by striking “**PARTIAL BIRTH**  
11 **ABORTIONS**” and inserting “**ABORTIONS**”.

○