

Partial Birth Q&A
September 18, 1998

Q. Are you pleased that the Senate today failed to override the President's veto on the Partial Birth Abortion Act by a vote of 64-36?

A. Of course we are. The President continues to oppose this legislation because it does not adequately protect women's health. The President repeatedly has called on Congress to amend the bill to include a narrow exemption covering the few cases where this procedure is needed to prevent women in dire circumstances from suffering serious injury. Unfortunately, Congress once again opted for partisanship over progress, and chose once again to send him a bill gravely endangering women's health. The President had no choice but to veto this bill, and is pleased that the Senate today sustained his veto.

Q. Would the President support the Durbin alternative legislation?

A. We have not yet seen the Durbin bill. The President has stated repeatedly that he would sign a bill banning all late term abortions, as long as it contains a narrow exception covering the few cases where late term abortions are needed to prevent women in dire circumstances from suffering serious injury. If the Durbin language meets this standard, then the President would support it.

Background: We understand that the Durbin bill is similar to the Daschle amendment offered last year -- banning all late term abortions, with an exception for when they are necessary to save a woman's life or protect her from grievous harm. We think, however, that the bill would add a new provision which would require a second independent doctor to certify that the procedure is necessary to protect a woman's life or health.