



PRESS RELEASE

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Family Council Applauds Passage of Heartbeat Protection Act in House Health Committee

On Thursday Family Council President Jerry Cox released a statement praising the House Public Health Committee for passing SB134, the Human Heartbeat Protection Act, by Senator Jason Rapert.

“This is a good bill,” Cox said. “It ensures an abortion will not occur at or after the twelfth week of pregnancy if an unborn baby’s heartbeat can be detected, except in cases of rape or incest, or if the mother’s life or physical health is in grave danger.”

“Our lawmakers are to be commended for voting in line with the values of the people they represent. They know the people of Arkansas are overwhelmingly pro-life. And today’s vote is simply a reflection of that. All of us who call Arkansas home should be proud our state is now ranked as the fourth most pro-life state in America. Today’s vote puts us one step closer to being the strongest pro-life state.”

Cox said the bill passed handily in the House Public Health Committee. “Of the twenty representatives on the committee, I think I heard about three votes against it,” Cox said. “Support for this bill seemed very strong.”

Cox also noted the bill had been amended from its original form. “Some friendly amendments were added to specify how a doctor checks for a fetal heartbeat, and some additional exceptions were put into the bill along with language stating abortions are permissible for any reason prior to the twelfth week of pregnancy. It’s still one of the strongest pro-life bills in the country, and I’m confident it can withstand any kind of court challenge opponents might throw at it.”

Cox said this bill is necessary for a number of reasons. “We know that the longer a woman waits to have an abortion, the more dangerous the abortion becomes. Ninety-three percent of abortions performed in Arkansas each year are on healthy mothers carrying healthy babies that are not the result of rape or incest. It’s unfortunate abortion has become just another means of birth control. This bill will help address that by specifying the timeframe during which an abortion can occur.”

Cox said he believes the Arkansas House will have little trouble passing the bill. “It already passed the Arkansas Senate and the House Public Health Committee. I’m confident it will pass the entire House. After that, the Senate will need to vote again to sign off on the amendments that have been added before it goes to the Governor’s desk.”

The Family Council is a conservative education and research organization based in Little Rock, Arkansas.

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