

June 4, 2003

### House Passes Partial Birth Abortion Ban

Washington- Today's action in the U.S House of Representatives to prohibit the indefensible and abhorrent procedure known as partial birth abortion is "a significant step toward restoring the primacy of our most essential right, the right to life, said U.S. Rep. Todd Akin (R-MO), an original cosponsor of the measure.

H.R. 760, the Partial Birth Abortion Ban of 2003, makes it crime punishable by up to two years in prison for an abortionist to perform. It was passed by a bipartisan majority of 282.

Prior to final passage, the House defeated an amendment intended to gut the legislation that would have allowed the procedure if an abortionist deemed it necessary to avert damage to a women's health and would have imposed only a fine on violators of the ban.

"Numerous health care professionals have consistently argued that this inhumane procedure is not medically necessary, and that any so-called 'health' exemption could be defined in a very subjective way to include perceived psychological discomfort, not any serious physiological problem," noted Akin.

Partial-birth abortion is a procedure in which a baby is partially delivered and is then killed by having its skull punctured. The baby then has its brain vacuumed out and is extracted from the birth canal. The procedure is typically performed after the baby can survive outside of the womb and has been declared to be medically unnecessary by the American Medical Association.

"Given that the Senate has already passed a nearly identical version, this bill will be headed to a House-Senate conference," state Akin. "If we can get a meaningful ban out of conference, I am confident that President Bush will sign it."