

Congressmen outline proposal to ban sex-selection abortions in U.S.

WASHINGTON - Despite evidence that sex-selection abortions may be occurring in the United States, U.S. law affords "less protection from sex-based feticide" than India or China do, according to proposed legislation that is to be introduced soon in the House of Representatives.

Republican Reps. Trent Franks of Arizona and Jeff Fortenberry of Nebraska discussed the Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act at a Sept. 23 press conference on Capitol Hill. The proposed bill would "prohibit discrimination against the unborn on the basis of sex or race."

"Today we put forth a principle that all Americans of good will can warmly embrace - that no child should be marked to die based on their sex or their race," said Franks.

"And we put it forth in the backdrop of over 100 million little girls having been aborted simply because they were little girls instead of little boys," he added. "It is also put forward in the backdrop of the mind-numbing reality that today in America half of all African-American children are being aborted before they are born."

The proposed legislation cited a report by Columbia University economists Douglas Almond and Lena Edlund published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences in March. Using data from the 2000 U.S. census, they concluded that birth patterns among U.S. families of Chinese, Korean and Asian Indian descent reflected "deviation in favor of sons" that was "evidence of sex selection, most likely at the prenatal stage."

The two congressmen were joined at the press conference by Steve Mosher, president of the Population Research Institute; Alveda King, a pastoral associate with Priests for Life; Day Gardner, president of the National Black Pro-Life Union; and the Rev. Clenard Childress, Northeast region president of the Life Education and Resource Network.

Rep. Franks said it was hypocritical that the U.S. Congress and U.S. representatives at the United Nations had condemned the practice of sex-selection abortions in other countries but that it had been prohibited in only two U.S. states.

The proposed law would impose a fine and/or up to a five-year prison sentence on anyone who “performs an abortion knowing that such abortion is sought based on the sex, gender, color or race of the child, or the race of a parent of that child” or threatens or forces another to undergo such an abortion.

Rep. Franks expressed hope that bipartisan support for the legislation could lead to further action to stop abortions.

“Maybe, just maybe, if we can agree that it is wrong to take the life of a child based on their sex or race, maybe someday it will spark that truth in our hearts that will lead us all to the moment when we can come together and protect all of God’s children simply because they are all God’s children,” he said.