

# WORLD & NATION

## Bishops' official praises House vote on abortion

WASHINGTON (CNS) — An official representing the U.S. bishops lauded House passage of the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act April 5 and said President Clinton should sign it.

"We pray that President Clinton will consider his flawed objections to the bill and sign it into law as soon as possible," said an April 5 statement from Helen Alvarez, a spokeswoman for the U.S. bishops' Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities.

The 287-141 vote marked the third time the House had passed a ban on the controversial abortion procedure. The Senate also has passed the ban three times, including a 63-34 vote last October.

But President Bill Clinton twice has vetoed the ban and has promised to do so again this year.

Suzanne Schnittman, life issues coordinator for the Diocese of Rochester, said that pressure must be kept on President Clinton, as well as congressional and presidential candidates, to push the bill through.

"It is the one issue that has opened the debate again and encouraged all people to re-examine what abortion really means and how close to infanticide it can be," she commented.

"This latest vote reflects little change on

the part of our legislators despite high levels of communication to those still unable to support a ban," Schnittman added.

The latest House vote was large enough to override a presidential veto, but last October's Senate vote was not.

The House bill, HB 3660, would make it a crime to deliberately kill a fetus once part of its body is outside the mother.

In the procedure that would be banned, the unborn child is partially delivered, feet first, before surgical scissors are stabbed into the base of the infant's head. The child's brain is then removed by suction, allowing for easier delivery of the collapsed head.

Anyone convicted of performing a partial-birth abortion could be sentenced to up to two years in jail. The bill would exempt women seeking the abortion from prosecution.

The bill also would allow for the aborted child's father to sue the abortionist if the father is married to the mother. It grants the same permission to the mother's parents if she is under age 18.

Doctors seeking to perform partial-birth abortions may make their cases before local medical boards, according to the bill.

In arguing for the ban, Rep. Ernie Fletcher, R-Ky., quoted former Vice President Hu-

bert H. Humphrey: "The moral test of government is how government treats those who are in the dawn of life."

Rep. Zach Wamp, R-Tenn., quoted from Mother Teresa's 1994 address at the National Prayer Breakfast when she said abortion is "the greatest destroyer of peace in the world today."

"We cannot solve all the problems in the world, but let us never bring in the worst problem of all, and that is to destroy love. And this is what happens when we tell people to practice contraception and abortion," Wamp added, still quoting Mother Teresa.

House Majority Leader Dick Armey, R-Texas, also used a quote from Mother Teresa to argue why it was necessary to fight for a ban in the face of an expected presidential veto: "My job and my responsibility is not to succeed. My job and my responsibility is to try."

In a 289-140 vote, the House rejected a move to recommit the bill to the House Judiciary Committee, with an instruction that, once reported out of committee, it include a clause permitting a partial-birth abortion when the mother's health is affected.

The original bill, sponsored by Rep.

Charles Canady, R-Fla., would permit partial-birth abortion only when the mother's life is in danger.

Many opponents to the partial-birth abortion ban chided the House Republican leadership for not having held a committee hearing on Canady's bill, and for prohibiting amendments from the floor.

Opponents had touted a measure sponsored by Reps. Steny Hoyer, D-Md., and Jim Greenwood, R-Pa., that would have banned all abortions from the seventh month of pregnancy but contained a health exception Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., described as "a loophole big enough to drive a Mack truck through."

Opponents also suggested that the timing of the vote was meant to influence the Supreme Court, which has scheduled oral arguments April 25 on a federal appellate decision to overturn Nebraska's partial-birth abortion ban.

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**EDITORS' NOTE:** Schnittman has announced that Stations of the Cross for Life will take place at 9:30 a.m. on Good Friday, April 21. The stations will be held in the chapel at McQuaid Jesuit High School, 1800 S. Clinton Ave., Rochester. The service is sponsored by the diocesan Pro-Life Planning Committee.

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### Bishop Malone dies; led renewal efforts



YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio (CNS) — Bishop James W. Malone, 80, a leader of renewal in the U.S. Catholic Church following the Second Vatican Council,

died in Youngstown April 9. He had retired as head of the Youngstown Diocese in 1995.

Bishop Malone was the first non-archbishop to be elected president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and from the 1960s until well into the '90s, played important roles in some of the conference's most important projects and activities.

Born and raised in Youngstown, Bishop Malone became a priest there in 1945 and auxiliary bishop in 1960 at age 40. Although he was one of the youngest bishops attending the Second Vatican Council in 1962-65, he was one of 10 bishops the council fathers selected to meet daily with journalists and explain the council debates and decisions.

Made bishop of Youngstown in 1968, he was elected the following year to head of the bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, then one of the conference's busiest committees, with massive tasks of liturgical renewal on its agenda. He later headed the bishops' Committee on Liaison With Priests, Religious and Laity, 1975-78 (later split into three separate committees), and Committee on Domestic Policy, 1989-92.

In 1980 he became the first non-archbishop to be elected NCCB vice president, and in 1983 he became the first non-archbishop president.

During his presidency the bishops moved ahead on implementing their just-approved 1983 pastoral letter on peace and adopted their 1986 pastoral on the economy — two documents regarded as among the most significant and influential in the history of the bishops' conference.

As president he also oversaw the implementation of the 1983 revised Code of Canon Law and represented the U.S. at the special 1985 bishops' synod in Rome, which assessed church renewal 20 years after the council.