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# The Smallest Victims—America Acknowledges the Fetus

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The law is now popularly known as the “Laci and Conner” law, named after Laci Peterson, who was murdered when eight months pregnant with a boy she had intended to name Conner. Scott Peterson, her husband, will soon face trial on two counts of murder.

In signing the bill, President George W. Bush commented: “As of today, the law of our nation will acknowledge the plain fact that crimes of violence against a pregnant woman often have two victims. Under this law, those who direct violence toward a pregnant woman will answer for the full extent of the harm they have done, and for all the crimes they have committed.”

According to national opinion polls, over eighty percent of Americans believe that the murder of a pregnant woman takes two lives, rather than one. According to The Washington Times, fewer than ten percent think such a crime has only the pregnant woman as victim.

The bill passed March 25 in the Senate on a 61-38 vote, only after the failure of an amendment proposed by Senator Diane Feinstein of California. Feinstein argued that the bill, in defining life from the moment of conception, is “the first step in removing a woman’s right to choose, particularly in the early months of a pregnancy before viability.” Feinstein revealed her logic when she asserted, “the bill covers children who aren’t children, who are a day old in the womb.” Children who aren’t children? Sen. Feinstein’s words are truly scary. Just when does Senator Feinstein believe that a child becomes a child?

Senator John Kerry, soon to be the Democratic Party’s official candidate for President, made a rare return visit to the Senate chamber just to vote against this bill. A campaign spokesman said, “John Kerry strongly supports making it a federal crime to commit an act of violence against a pregnant woman. . . He agrees with the vast majority of Americans who want tough punishment for anyone who would commit such heinous crimes and know we can do so without undermining a woman’s right to choose.” By voting against the bill, Kerry served his pro-abortion supporters—knowing full well that his spokesman’s statement really amounted to nothing. The bottom line is that Sen. Kerry opposed making the killing of a fetus a crime.

The bill took five years to work through Congress, and the Senate’s passage of the bill came after the House of Representatives passed the act by a 245-163 vote. As written, the Act actually has nothing at all to do with abortion, for the law states that “nothing in this section shall be construed to permit the prosecution...of any person for conduct relating

to an abortion for which the consent of the pregnant woman, or a person authorized by law to act on her behalf, has been obtained.”

Undeterred, the pro-abortion movement went in to full outrage mode. Kate Michelman, president of NARAL Pro-Choice America, warned, “Pro-Choice Americans aren’t going to forget this president’s record, with its steady drumbeat of attacks on reproductive freedom.”

The National Organization of Women [NOW] joined the chorus, and released a statement accusing the president of subverting abortion rights. “George W. Bush and his anti-abortion allies are gloating today because they exploited the devastating murder of a woman to attack the reproductive rights of all women.” NOW President Kim Gandy went on to argue, “We must address the problem of violence against women with increased funding for education and for enforcement. Any injury inflicted on a woman, pregnant or not, should be prosecuted as a crime against the woman.” Gandy and her NOW colleagues are so fanatically committed to a woman’s right to abortion that they cannot even admit the existence of the baby in the womb. Her pathetic call for nothing more than education and enforcement is further proof that the Culture of Death is running out of intellectual fuel—and losing their ability to hide from the fetus.

Make no mistake. The passage of the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act and the Unborn Victims of Violence Act has shaken the abortion industry to its foundations. These new laws are not only the first major legislative victories for the cause of life since the Roe v. Wade decision was handed down in 1973, they are also clear signs that the logic of death is giving way to a renewed concern for life. The fetus stands at the center of concern in both laws—and it’s the fetus that the pro-abortion movement must fear.

Once the fetus is allowed into moral consideration—once its very existence is admitted—the whole question of abortion shifts from a matter of concern “only between a woman and her doctor” to something very different. The acknowledgement of the fetus is a huge gain for the cause of life and moral sanity. When the fetus enters the moral arena, the human conscience cannot ignore its existence and its interests.

The Unborn Victims of Violence Act is just one law—but it is a huge development. The law does not disallow even one abortion, but its logic undercuts the obscene claim that abortion is a constitutional right. The Culture of Death just took a big hit—and this one really matters.

