

Statement on Utah HB 0136
Gestational Age Act
SUPPORT
Presented to Utah House Judiciary Committee

February 20, 2019
Written Testimony Donna J. Harrison M.D., Executive Director

Chairman and members of the committee,

Thank you for allowing me to address this committee. I am Dr. Donna Harrison, a board-certified Obstetrician and Gynecologist, and Executive Director of the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists, representing over 4,600 medical professionals across the U.S.


Utah HB 0136 the Gestational Age Act prohibits the performance of abortions on fetuses who have achieved a gestational age of 18 weeks. There are three very good reasons for banning abortions on fetuses who are 18 weeks and older. 1) Fetuses at 18 weeks feel pain and abortions at that gestational age are most commonly performed by D&E- the tearing apart of the fetus, limb from limb, also known as “dismemberment abortions”, 2) Abortions performed at that gestational age have a serious risk to the mother of major hemorrhage, perforation of the uterus and anesthesia complications, and 3) Abortions performed at or after 18 weeks have a major risk of preterm birth in subsequent pregnancies, and increased risk of suicide, drug abuse and hospitalizable major depression when compared to unplanned pregnancies carried to term.

1) Fetuses at 18 weeks feel pain and abortions at that gestational age are most commonly performed by D&E- the tearing apart of the fetus, limb from limb, also known as “dismemberment abortions”

From 18- 24 weeks gestation, a D&E (Dilation and Evacuation) procedure is the most common method of abortion (95%). After cervical dilation, the abortionist will progressively disarticulate the fetus by pulling off his legs and arms and sections of his torso, prior to crushing and removing his skull. This is a non-intact D&E, or “dismemberment abortion”. See Appendix A

The International Association for the Study of Pain defines pain as an “unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage”. There is ample tissue damage which occurs during the dismemberment process associated with a D&E abortion at 18 weeks and beyond. See Appendix B AAPLOG FACT SHEET FETAL PAIN.

Fetal pain perception begins with the presence of cutaneous sensory receptors (nociceptors), which begin to develop in the peri-oral area at 7 weeks, spread to the palms and soles by 11 weeks, to trunk and proximal limbs by 15 weeks, and are present throughout the fetus’ entire body by 20 weeks. As



Respectfully submitted,

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Life. It's why we are here.



CHERISH LIFE ACT

HB136

Protecting unborn babies, women,
and fighting to bring back Utah values.

CHERISHING UNBORN CHILDREN

The State of Utah has an obligation to protect ALL human life. This common sense legislation would protect the life of a baby who:

- can move around in her/his mother's womb and even kick.
- can sense movement outside her/his mother's womb.
- has taste buds and can taste what her/his mother eats.
- has eyes and eyelids that are beginning to open.
- has a heartbeat.
- can open and close her/his fingers and even hiccup.

Permitting later-term abortions that impose substantial pain on an unborn child is incompatible with the concept of human dignity and has no place in civilized society.

PROTECTING MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

Most elective abortions committed after a mother has been pregnant for 15 weeks require the unborn child to be crushed and torn apart.

Choosing to participate in this barbaric act is dangerous for women and conflicts with a physician's oath to protect life.

CHERISHING MOTHERS

Women deserve real healthcare. This law would ensure that women are not put at greater risk of death, illness, or psychological trauma resulting from later-term abortions.

- As the second trimester progresses, the maternal health risks of undergoing an abortion procedure are greater than the risks of carrying the pregnancy to term
- The increased chance of maternal mortality increases by 38% with every week after 8 weeks gestation.
- According to the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute, the risk of a mother dying as the result of an abortion rises more than 2,200% between 8 weeks and 18 weeks of her pregnancy.
- In abortions performed after 15 weeks, there is a higher risk of requiring a hysterectomy, other reparative surgery, or a blood transfusion.
- The State of Utah has a legitimate interest in protecting the health of the woman considering abortion.
- Those who oppose this commonsense law are putting women's health and well-being at risk in favor of the abortion lobby's bottom line.

REALIGNING OUR POLICIES

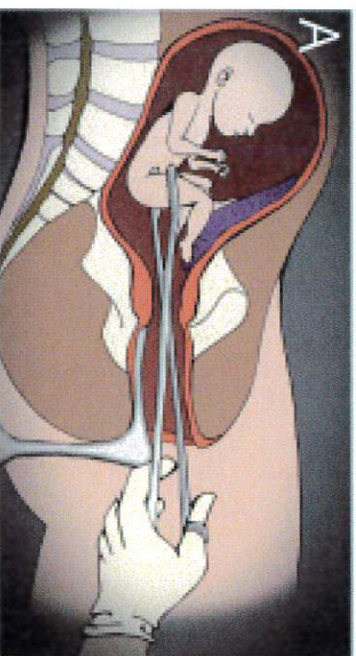
The US is 1 of 4 nations that permits abortion-on-demand throughout all 9 months of pregnancy. The other three nations include:

- North Korea
- China
- Canada

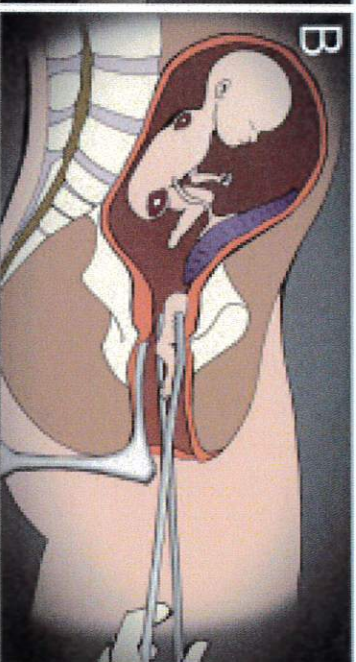
92% of countries worldwide limit abortion after 12 weeks gestation.

Second Trimester Abortion: Dilation and Evacuation (D&E)

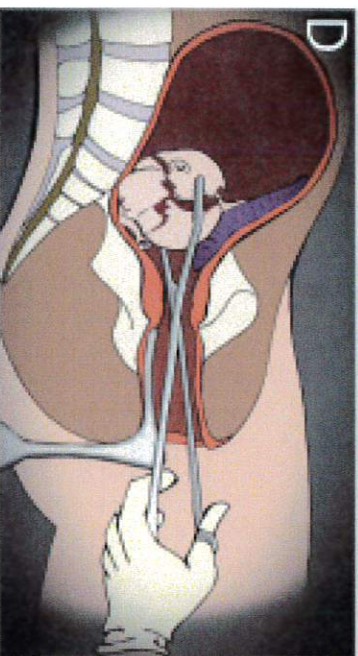
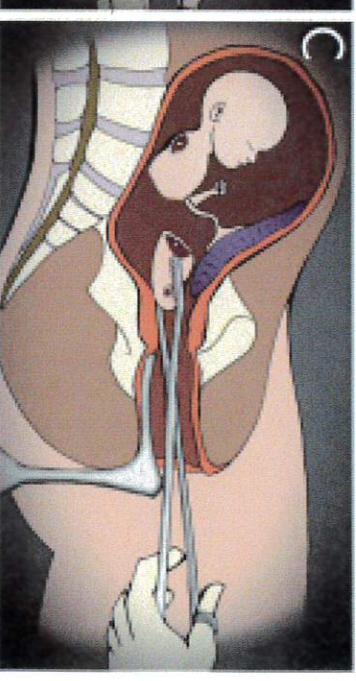
A. A sopher clamp is inserted into the uterus. The abortionist grasps for an arm or a leg.



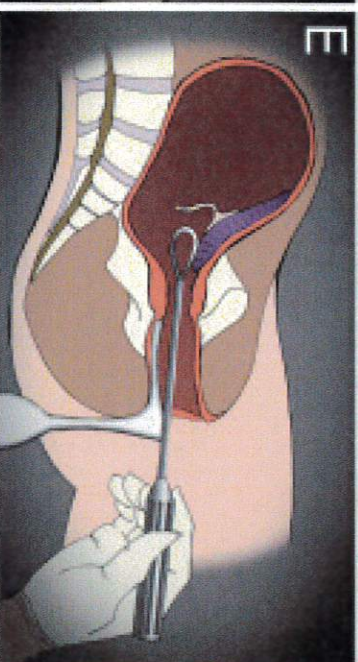
B. One by one, the limbs of the preborn child are removed.



C. The abortionist removes the spine, the intestines, the heart and lungs.



D. The most difficult part of the procedure is removing the skull, which is about the size of a large plum at 20 weeks. The head is grasped and crushed.



E. A curette is used to scrape the lining of the uterus for any remaining parts, which can cause infection or bleeding if left in the uterus.



F. After all the parts have been removed, the abortionist reassembles the parts on a tray to ensure the uterus is empty.