

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8855

To amend title 18, United States Code, to protect unborn children.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 27, 2024

Mr. GOOD of Virginia (for himself, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. DUNCAN, and Mr. ROSENDALE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, Natural Resources, Ways and Means, and Oversight and Accountability, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To amend title 18, United States Code, to protect unborn
children.

- 1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
- 2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
- 3 **SECTION 1. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND DECLARATION OF**
- 4 **CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY FOR ENACT-**
- 5 **MENT.**
- 6 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The dignity of every human life is reflected
2 in our Nation's founding principles, "Life, Liberty
3 and the Pursuit of Happiness".

4 (2) Abortion ends the life of a person entitled
5 to rights under the Constitution and the laws of this
6 Nation. Since the 1973 decision of Roe v. Wade,
7 over 60,000,000 abortions have ended the lives of
8 unborn children. Unborn children are among the
9 most vulnerable and deserve full and equal protec-
10 tion of the law.

11 (3) Congress exercised its authority under the
12 Commerce Clause when it enacted the Partial-Birth
13 Abortion Ban Act of 2003 and has used that author-
14 ity to enact other criminal statutes, such as the pro-
15 hibition on female genital mutilation (18 U.S.C.
16 116).

17 (4) The Supreme Court has broadly interpreted
18 Congress' power to regulate interstate commerce,
19 holding that it applies to activities with a substantial
20 economic effect or that, cumulatively, affect com-
21 merce. See, e.g., NLRB v. Jones & Laughlin Steel
22 Corp., 301 U.S. 1 (1937); United States v. Darby,
23 312 U.S. 657 (1941); and Wickard v. Filburn, 317
24 U.S. 111 (1942).

1 (5) Abortion often involves commercial activity
2 between states and across foreign borders. This in-
3 cludes the manufacturing and distribution of drugs
4 that cause abortion and the use of equipment, in-
5 struments, and other supplies that have traveled in
6 interstate commerce to perform surgical abortions.
7 See, e.g., Scarborough v. United States, 431 U.S.
8 563 (1977).

9 (6) Article I, section 8, clause 1 of the Con-
10 stitution grants Congress broad spending powers,
11 which Congress may attach conditions to: “The Con-
12 gress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Du-
13 ties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and pro-
14 vide for the common Defense and general Welfare of
15 the United States”. Furthermore, in clause 18 Con-
16 gress can “make all Laws which shall be necessary
17 and proper for carrying into Executive the foregoing
18 Powers . . .”. The Supreme Court has upheld this
19 generally in cases like South Dakota v. Dole and in
20 regard to abortion in Harris v. McRae.

21 (7) Through the decision in Dobbs v. Jackson
22 Women’s Health Organization, handed down in June
23 2022, the Supreme Court has redressed and cor-
24 rected the grave injustice which for 50 years had
25 been perpetuated by their decisions in Roe v. Wade,

1 Doe v. Bolton, and Planned Parenthood v. Casey, al-
2 lowing Congress and State legislators to enact legis-
3 lation to limit abortion as the legislators see fit. The
4 Court declared that “the Constitution does not con-
5 fer a right to abortion” (Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s
6 Health Org., 142 S. Ct. 2228, 2234 (2022)).

7 (8) The Supreme Court has held that “[i]t is
8 time to heed the Constitution and return the issue
9 of abortion to the people’s elected representatives”
10 (Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization,
11 142 S. Ct. 2228, 2243 (2022)).

12 (9) The Supreme Court has also held that “[a]
13 law regulating abortion, like other health and wel-
14 fare laws, is entitled to a ‘strong presumption of va-
15 lidity.’ . . . It must be sustained if there is a rational
16 basis on which the legislature could have thought
17 that it would serve legitimate State interests . . .
18 These legitimate interests include respect for and
19 preservation of prenatal life at all stages of develop-
20 ment . . . ; the protection of maternal health and
21 safety; the elimination of particularly gruesome or
22 barbaric medical procedures; the preservation of the
23 integrity of the medical profession; the mitigation of
24 fetal pain; and the prevention of discrimination on
25 the basis of race, sex, or disability.” (Dobbs v. Jack-

1 son Women’s Health Organization, 142 S. Ct. at
2 2239).

3 (10) Medical and other authorities now know
4 more about human prenatal development than ever
5 before, including that life begins at the moment of
6 conception and the child in a woman’s womb is a
7 human being.

8 (11) Even if there exists some degree of uncer-
9 tainty about an aspect of prenatal development, the
10 Supreme Court has held that Congress and State
11 legislatures retain “wide discretion to pass legisla-
12 tion” (Gonzales v. Carhart, 550 U.S. at 163). “The
13 law need not give abortion doctors unfettered choice
14 in the course of their medical practice, nor should it
15 elevate their status above other physicians in the
16 medical community” (Gonzales v. Carhart, 550 U.S.
17 at 163). “Medical uncertainty does not foreclose the
18 exercise of legislative power in the abortion context
19 any more than it does in other contexts” (Gonzales
20 v. Carhart, 550 U.S. at 164).

21 (12) Scientific evidence and personal testi-
22 monies document the massive harm that abortion
23 causes to women. Abortion heightens the risk of
24 mental health issues with studies showing that after
25 an abortion women are 34 percent more likely to de-

1 develop anxiety disorders, 37 percent more likely to de-
2 velop depression, 110 percent more likely to rely on
3 alcohol use or abuse, 115 percent more likely to de-
4 velop suicidal behavior, and 220 percent more likely
5 to take on marijuana use or abuse. As many as 60
6 percent of women having an abortion experience
7 some level of emotional distress afterwards, with 30
8 percent being classified as severe distress. Abortion
9 also includes risks to physical health such as heavy
10 or persistent bleeding, damage to cervix, abdominal
11 pain or cramping, scarring of uterine lining, breast
12 cancer, future premature births or miscarriages, in-
13 fection or sepsis, placenta previa, perforation of
14 uterus, damage to other organs, and even death.

15 (13) More than 50 percent of abortions nation-
16 wide are committed by chemical abortion. Many of
17 these abortions are obtained through telehealth visits
18 and without the supervision of a licensed medical
19 care professional.

20 (14) Every State has enacted a “safe haven”
21 law, relieving the responsibility of childcare for par-
22 ents who do not wish to care for a child.

23 (15) Public attitudes favoring adoption have
24 created a culture of adoption in the United States,

1 with many families waiting long periods of time to
2 adopt newborn infants.

3 (16) Abortion disproportionately affects minor-
4 ity communities. Black babies are 3.4 times more
5 likely to be aborted as White babies. An estimated
6 19,000,000 Black babies have been killed by abor-
7 tion since 1973. Minorities have been the unwitting
8 victims of a hidden racist agenda of the abortion in-
9 dustry for over 50 years.

10 (b) PURPOSE.—It is the intent of this Act to ensure
11 that abortion is abolished and to protect the lives of un-
12 born children.

13 **SEC. 2. PROHIBITION AGAINST CERTAIN ABORTION MEAS-
14 URES.**

15 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 74 of title 18, United
16 States Code, is amended by amending section 1531 to
17 read as follows:

18 **“§ 1531. Prohibition against certain abortion meas-
19 ures**

20 “(a) CRIMINAL OFFENSE.—Notwithstanding any
21 other provision of law, a licensed physician who—

22 “(1) in the circumstances described in sub-
23 section (d), intentionally performs or attempts to
24 perform an abortion at any point after fertilization;
25 or

1 “(2) receives any Federal funds under any cov-
2 ered program that intentionally performs or at-
3 tempts to perform an abortion at any point after
4 fertilization,

5 “shall be guilty of a class D felony.”.

6 “(b) CIVIL REMEDIES.—

7 “(1) WITHOUT CONSENT.—A woman upon
8 whom an abortion was performed or attempted,
9 without consent or that occurred under duress,
10 fraud, or inducement, may bring in an appropriate
11 court a civil action against the licensed physician in
12 violation of subsection (a) to obtain appropriate re-
13 lief.

14 “(2) REMEDY FOR PARENT OF A MINOR.—A
15 parent of a minor upon whom an abortion has been
16 performed or attempted may bring in an appropriate
17 court a civil action against the licensed physician in
18 violation of subsection (a) to obtain appropriate re-
19 lief.

20 “(3) APPROPRIATE RELIEF DEFINED.—In this
21 subsection, the term ‘appropriate relief’ includes—

22 “(A) money damages for all injuries, psy-
23 chological and physical, occasioned by the viola-
24 tion of this section;

1 “(B) statutory damages equal to the
2 amount that is three times the cost of the abor-
3 tion;

4 “(C) punitive damages; and

5 “(D) reasonable attorneys' fees and costs.

6 “(c) **AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE.**—It is an affirmative
7 defense to prosecution under this section if—

8 “(1) a licensed physician provides medical treat-
9 ment to a pregnant woman which results in the acci-
10 dental or unintentional injury or death to an unborn
11 child; or

12 “(2) the abortion was performed with the pur-
13 pose of—

14 “(A) saving the life of a pregnant woman
15 whose life is endangered by a physical disorder,
16 physical illness, or physical injury, including a
17 life-endangering physical condition caused by or
18 arising from the pregnancy itself, but not in-
19 cluding psychological or emotional conditions;

20 “(B) removing a dead unborn child caused
21 by miscarriage or stillbirth; or

22 “(C) removing an ectopic pregnancy.

23 “(d) **CIRCUMSTANCES DESCRIBED.**—For the pur-
24 poses of subsection (a), the circumstances described are
25 that:

1 “(1) The licensed physician performed an abor-
2 tion using a means, channel, facility, or instrumen-
3 tality of interstate or foreign commerce in further-
4 ance of or in connection with the conduct described
5 in subsection (a).

6 “(2) A payment of any kind was made, directly
7 or indirectly, in furtherance of or in connection with
8 the conduct described in subsection (a) using any
9 means, channel, facility, or instrumentality of inter-
10 state or foreign commerce or in or affecting inter-
11 state or foreign commerce.

12 “(3) Any instrument, item, substance, or other
13 object that has traveled in interstate or foreign com-
14 merce was used to perform the conduct described in
15 subsection (a).

16 “(4) The conduct described in subsection (a)
17 occurred within the special maritime and territorial
18 jurisdiction of the United States, or any territory or
19 possession of the United States.

20 “(5) The conduct described in subsection (a)
21 otherwise occurred in or affected interstate or for-
22 eign commerce.

23 “(6) The conduct described in subsection (a)
24 occurred in the District of Columbia.

1 “(7) The conduct described in subsection (a)
2 occurred in a health care facility owned or operated
3 by the Federal Government.

4 “(e) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.—

5 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this section
6 shall be construed to—

7 “(A) authorize the criminal prosecution or
8 conviction of a woman with the death of her
9 own unborn child;

10 “(B) impose civil or criminal liability on a
11 woman upon whom an abortion is performed or
12 attempted;

13 “(C) prohibit the administration of
14 misoprostol for the purposes of treatment of a
15 miscarriage or stillbirth; or

16 “(D) prohibit the sale, use, prescription, or
17 administration of contraception, if the contra-
18 ception is sold, used, prescribed or administered
19 in accordance with manufacturer instructions or
20 for non-life-ending purposes.

21 “(2) STATE LEGISLATION.—Nothing in this
22 section shall be construed to override or enforce a
23 greater penalty established by State law with respect
24 to the protection of the life of an unborn child at
25 any point after fertilization.

1 “(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

2 “(1) ABORTION.—The term ‘abortion’ means
3 the act of using, prescribing, administering, pro-
4 curing, or selling any instrument, medicine, drug, or
5 any other substance, device, or means with the pur-
6 pose to terminate a pregnancy of a woman, with
7 knowledge that the termination by any of those
8 means will with reasonable likelihood cause the
9 death of the unborn child.

10 “(2) CONTRACEPTION.—The term ‘contracep-
11 tion’ is a measure, drug, or chemical that prevents
12 a pregnancy before fertilization.

13 “(3) COVERED PROGRAM.—The term ‘covered
14 program’ means:

15 “(A) The program for medical assistance
16 established under title XIX of the Social Secu-
17 rity Act.

18 “(B) The State children’s health insurance
19 program established under title XXI of the So-
20 cial Security Act.

21 “(C) The Indian Health Service.

22 “(D) The Veterans Health Administration.

23 “(E) The TRICARE program (as such
24 program is defined in section 1072(7) of title
25 10).

1 “(F) Any project grant or contract for
2 family planning services awarded under title X
3 of the Public Health Services Act.

4 “(4) FERTILIZATION.—The term ‘fertilization’
5 means the fusion of a human spermatozoon with a
6 human ovum.

7 “(5) LICENSED PHYSICIAN.—The term ‘licensed
8 physician’ means a doctor of medicine or osteopathy
9 legally authorized to practice medicine and surgery
10 by the State in which the doctor performs such ac-
11 tivity, or any other individual legally authorized by
12 the State to perform abortions.

13 “(6) MISCARRIAGE.—The term ‘miscarriage’ is
14 the spontaneous loss of pregnancy before 20 weeks
15 of pregnancy.

16 “(7) STILLBIRTH.—The term ‘stillbirth’ means
17 the loss of a baby at or after 20 weeks of pregnancy.

18 “(8) UNBORN CHILD.—The term ‘unborn child’
19 means an individual organism of the species Homo
20 sapiens from fertilization until live birth.”.

21 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for
22 chapter 74 of title 18, United States Code, the item relat-
23 ing to section 1531 is amended to read as follows:

“1531. Prohibition against certain abortion measures.”

24 (c) CHAPTER HEADING.—The header of chapter 74
25 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by striking

1 "PARTIAL-BIRTH ABORTIONS" and inserting
2 "ABORTIONS".

3 SEC. 3. PROHIBITION OF ABORTIONS IN HEALTH PRO-
4 GRAMS THAT ACCEPT FEDERAL FUNDS.

5 (a) MEDICAID.—Section 1902 of the Social Security
6 Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a) is amended by adding at the end
7 the following new subsection:

8 "(uu) PROHIBITION ON STATE PLAN COVERAGE OF
9 ABORTION.—Notwithstanding subsection (b), beginning
10 on January 1 of the second year beginning on or after
11 the date of the enactment of this subsection, the Secretary
12 may not approve a State plan for medical assistance under
13 this section, and shall revoke any such plan in effect as
14 of such date, if such State plan provides payment for abor-
15 tion (as such term is defined in section 1531 of title 18)
16 furnished at any point after fertilization, except to save
17 the life of a pregnant woman whose life is endangered by
18 a physical disorder, physical illness, or physical injury, in-
19 cluding a life-endangering physical condition caused by or
20 arising from the pregnancy itself, but not including psy-
21 chological or emotional conditions.".

22 (b) CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 2107(e)(1) of the
24 Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397gg(e)(1)) is

1 amended by adding at the end the following new
2 subparagraph:

3 “(U) Section 1902(uu) (relating to prohibi-
4 tion on payment for abortion).”.

5 (2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

6 (A) LIMITATION ON FUNDS PROVIDED TO
7 STATE.—Section 2105(c)(1) of the Social Secu-
8 rity Act (42 U.S.C. 1397ee(c)(1)) is amended
9 by striking “the mother or if the pregnancy is
10 the result of an act of rape or incest” and in-
11 serting “a pregnant woman whose life is endan-
12 gered by a physical disorder, physical illness, or
13 physical injury, including a life-endangering
14 physical condition caused by or arising from the
15 pregnancy itself, but not including psychological
16 or emotional conditions”.

17 (B) CHILD HEALTH ASSISTANCE DE-
18 FINED.—Section 2110(a)(16) of the Social Se-
19 curity Act (42 U.S.C. 1397jj(a)(16)) is amend-
20 ed by striking “the mother or if the pregnancy
21 is the result of an act of rape or incest” and
22 inserting “a pregnant woman whose life is en-
23 dangered by a physical disorder, physical ill-
24 ness, or physical injury, including a life-endan-
25 gering physical condition caused by or arising

1 from the pregnancy itself, but not including
2 psychological or emotional conditions”.

3 (c) AMENDMENT TO INDIAN HEALTH CARE IM-
4 PROVEMENT ACT.—Title II of the Indian Health Care Im-
5 provement Act (25 U.S.C. 1621 et seq.) is amended by
6 adding at the end a new section:

7 **“SEC. 227. PROHIBITION AGAINST OFFERING AN ABORTION.**

8 “Amounts appropriated to carry out this title may
9 not be used to offer an abortion (as such term is defined
10 in section 1531 of title 18, United States Code) at any
11 point after fertilization, except to save the life of a preg-
12 nant woman whose life is endangered by a physical dis-
13 order, physical illness, or physical injury, including a life-
14 endangering physical condition caused by or arising from
15 the pregnancy itself, but not including psychological or
16 emotional conditions.”.

17 (d) AMENDMENT TO TITLE X.—Section 1008 of the
18 Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300a–6) is amended
19 to read as follows:

20 “PROHIBITION OF ABORTION

21 “SEC. 1008.

22 “(a) No funds may be made available under this title
23 to any public or private entity if such entity or any affil-
24 iate or agency thereof offers abortions at any point after
25 fertilization, except to save the life of a pregnant woman
26 whose life is endangered by a physical disorder, physical

1 illness, or physical injury, including a life-endangering
2 physical condition caused by or arising from the pregnancy
3 itself, but not including psychological or emotional condi-
4 tions.

5 “(b) In this section:

6 “(1) The term ‘abortion’ has the meaning given
7 to such term in section 1531 of title 18, United
8 States Code.

9 “(2) The term ‘affiliate’ means any company
10 that controls, is controlled by, or is under common
11 control with an entity referred to in subsection (a).”.

12 (e) TABLE OF CONTENTS AMENDMENT.—The table
13 of contents for title II of the Indian Health Care Improve-
14 ment Act (25 U.S.C. 1621 et seq.) is amended by adding
15 at the end the following:

“227. Prohibition against offering an abortion.”.

16 **SEC. 4. PROHIBITION ON GROUP HEALTH COVERAGE FOR**
17 **ABORTIONS.**

18 (a) PROHIBITING COVERAGE UNDER GROUP
19 HEALTH PLANS AND GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL HEALTH
20 INSURANCE.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subpart II of part A of the
22 Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300gg–11 et
23 seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following
24 new section:

1 **“SEC. 2730. PROHIBITION ON COVERAGE FOR ABORTION.**

2 “(a) IN GENERAL.—A group health plan, and a
3 health insurance issuer offering group or individual health
4 insurance coverage, may not provide coverage for abortion
5 (as such term is defined in section 1531 of title 18) at
6 any point after fertilization, except to save the life of a
7 pregnant woman whose life is endangered by a physical
8 disorder, physical illness, or physical injury, including a
9 life-endangering physical condition caused by or arising
10 from the pregnancy itself, but not including psychological
11 or emotional conditions.

12 “(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-
13 tion shall be construed to prohibit the coverage of items
14 or services that are furnished in order to—

15 “(1) remove a dead unborn child caused by mis-
16 carriage or stillbirth, or
17 “(2) remove an ectopic pregnancy.”.

18 (2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made
19 by this subsection shall apply to plan years begin-
20 ning on or after January 1 of the second year begin-
21 ning on or after the date of the enactment of this
22 subsection.

23 (b) APPLICATION OF ABORTION PROHIBITION TO
24 PREMIUM CREDITS AND COST-SHARING REDUCTIONS
25 UNDER ACA.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 36B(c)(3)(A) of the
2 Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26 U.S.C.
3 36B(c)(3)(A)) is amended by inserting before the
4 period at the end the following: “or a health plan
5 that includes coverage for abortion (as such term is
6 defined in section 1531 of title 18) furnished at any
7 point after fertilization, except to save the life of a
8 pregnant woman whose life is endangered by a phys-
9 ical disorder, physical illness, or physical injury, in-
10 cluding a life-endangering physical condition caused
11 by or arising from the pregnancy itself, but not in-
12 cluding psychological or emotional conditions”.

13 (2) CONFORMING ACA AMENDMENTS.—Section
14 1303 of Public Law 111–148 (42 U.S.C. 18023) is
15 amended—

16 (A) in subsection (a)(1), by striking “abor-
17 tion coverage” and inserting “coverage of abor-
18 tions described in subsection (b)(1)(B)(ii)”;

19 (B) in subsection (b)—

20 (i) in paragraph (1)—

21 (I) in the paragraph heading, by
22 striking “VOLUNTARY CHOICE OF
23 COVERAGE OF” and inserting “PROHI-
24 BITION ON COVERAGE OF CERTAIN”;

25 (II) in subparagraph (A)—

1 “(ii) PERMITTED ABORTION SERV-
2 ICES.—The services described in this
3 clause are only abortions that are fur-
4 nished to save the life of a pregnant
5 woman whose life is endangered by a phys-
6 ical disorder, physical illness, or physical
7 injury, including a life-endangering phys-
8 ical condition caused by or arising from
9 the pregnancy itself, but not including psy-
10 chological or emotional conditions.”;

11 (ii) by striking paragraphs (2) and
12 (3); and

13 (iii) by redesignating paragraph (4) as
14 paragraph (2).

15 (3) APPLICATION TO MULTI-STATE PLANS.—
16 Section 1334(a)(6) of Public Law 111–148 (42
17 U.S.C. 18054(a)(6)) is amended—

18 (A) in the paragraph heading, by striking
19 “ASSURED AVAILABILITY OF VARIED COV-
20 ERAGE” and inserting “PROHIBITION OF CER-
21 TAIN ABORTION COVERAGE”; and

22 (B) by striking “there is at least one such
23 plan that does not” and inserting “such plans
24 do not”.

1 (4) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made
2 by paragraphs (1) and (2) shall apply to taxable
3 years ending after January 1 of the second year be-
4 ginning on or after the date of the enactment of this
5 subsection, but only with respect to plan years be-
6 ginning on or after such date, and the amendments
7 made by paragraph (3) shall apply to plan years be-
8 ginning on or after such date.

9 (c) AMENDMENT TO TITLE 5.—Section 8902 of title
10 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end
11 the following:

12 “(q) A contract may not be made or a plan approved
13 that includes an obstetrical benefit that includes coverage
14 for an abortion (as defined in section 1531 of title 18),
15 except to save the life of a pregnant woman whose life
16 is endangered by a physical disorder, physical illness, or
17 physical injury, including a life-endangering physical con-
18 dition caused by or arising from the pregnancy itself, but
19 not including a psychological or emotional condition.”.

