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For immediate release: Thursday, March 10, 2016

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WEST VIRGINIA BANS DISMEMBERMENT ABORTION
State Legislature Overrides Governor Tomblin's Veto

WASHINGTON – Both chambers of the West Virginia Legislature today voted to override Democratic Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin's veto of the Unborn Child Protection from Dismemberment Abortion Act (S.B. 10/H.B. 4004). Both chambers passed the bill last month by overwhelming margins. The Mountain State becomes the third in the nation to pass the National Right to Life model bill, which will go into effect in late May and prohibits the use of dismemberment abortions.

"When the national debate focuses only on the mother, it is forgetting someone," said National Right to Life Director of State Legislation Mary Spaulding Balch, J.D. **"Banning dismemberment abortion in West Virginia has the potential to transform the debate when people realize that living unborn children are being killed by being torn limb from limb."**

West Virginia joins Kansas and Oklahoma in having enacted the Unborn Child Protection from Dismemberment Abortion Act. The bill has also been introduced in Idaho, Mississippi, Missouri and Nebraska; it is expected it will also be introduced in several other states.

West Virginians for Life Legislative Coordinator Karen Cross observed, **"Governor Tomblin has now vetoed three pro-life bills in as many years. Today, the pro-life leadership in the Legislature and an overwhelming bipartisan majority of senators and delegates stood up on behalf of the unborn and voted to override the Governor's veto. Thanks to their efforts, unborn children in West Virginia will be protected from this barbaric procedure."**

Sponsored by state Sen. Dave Sypolt (R-Preston, 14) and Del. Lynne Arvon (R-Raleigh, 31), the Unborn Child Protection from Dismemberment Abortion Act has been the top state legislative priority for National Right to Life and its affiliate, West Virginians for Life.

D&E dismemberment abortions are as brutal as the partial-birth abortion method, which is now illegal in the United States.

In his dissent to the U.S. Supreme Court's 2000 *Stenberg v. Carhart* decision, Justice Kennedy observed that in D&E dismemberment abortions, "The fetus, in many cases, dies just as a human adult or child would: It bleeds to death as it is torn limb from limb. The fetus can be alive at the beginning of the dismemberment process and can survive for a time while its limbs are being torn off."

Justice Kennedy added in the Court's 2007 opinion, *Gonzales v. Carhart*, which upheld the ban on partial-birth abortion, that D&E abortions are "laden with the power to devalue human life..."

"When abortion textbooks describe in cold, explicit detail exactly how to kill a human being by ripping off arms and legs piece by piece, civilized members of society have no choice but

to stand up and demand a change," added Spaulding Balch. "When you think it can't be uglier, the abortion industry continues to shock with violent methods of abortion."

A medical illustration of a D&E dismemberment abortion is available here:

www.nrlc.org/abortion/pba/deabortiongraphic.

Background materials on the bill are available on the National Right to Life website:

www.nrlc.org/statelegislation/dismemberment. Included in the background materials is the testimony of Anthony Levatino, M.D., before the U.S. House Judiciary Committee Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice in May 2013, in which he described in great detail the D&E dismemberment abortions he once performed.

National Right to Life experts, including President Carol Tobias, and Director of State Legislation Mary Spaulding Balch, J.D are available to provide further information and commentary on the Unborn Child Protection from Dismemberment Abortion Act. To arrange an interview, call the NRLC Communications Department at [\(202\) 626-8825](tel:2026268825) or email mediarelations@nrlc.org.

Founded in 1968, the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC), the federation of 50 state right-to-life affiliates and more than 3,000 local chapters, is the nation's oldest and largest grassroots pro-life organization. Recognized as the flagship of the pro-life movement, NRLC works through legislation and education to protect innocent human life from abortion, infanticide, assisted suicide and euthanasia.

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