



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on February 2, 2021

Honduras Adds Permanent Abortion Ban to Constitution

Honduras recently passed a constitutional amendment that, barring a sea change in public opinion, permanently prohibits all abortions in the Central American country.

“All human beings have a right to life from the moment of conception,” [declared](#) Honduran National Congress member Mario Perez, who introduced the amendment on January 21.

Just seven days later, Congress ratified the amendment, which reads: “The unborn shall be considered as born for all rights accorded within the limits established by law. It is prohibited and illegal for the mother or a third party to practice any form of interruption of life on the unborn, whose life must be respected from conception.”



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“The changes raise the Congressional voting threshold to modify abortion law from two-thirds majority to three-quarters,” reported [CNN](#). “Since Honduras’s unicameral Congress has 128 deputies, the new rules would require at least 96 to vote for future changes to these articles — an unlikely scenario at the moment, since 86 voted for the amendments.”

The amendment, known as “Shield Against Abortion in Honduras,” was promoted by the National Party of Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández. However, as should be obvious from the number of deputies who voted it for it, the measure was popular across party lines.

“As a woman and a mother, I am in favor of life and against abortion, I want to speak on behalf of those who are in the mother’s womb and cannot be opposed,” [said](#) Gloria Bonilla, a Liberal Party deputy who voted for the amendment.

The amendment will have no effect on existing Honduran law, which already prohibits killing the unborn without exception. Noted CNN, “In February 1997, Honduras’s penal code was modified to establish a penalty from three to six years in prison for women who obtain an abortion and for the medical staff who are involved in the process. In April 2009, the country’s Congress passed a bill banning emergency contraception — a move upheld by the Supreme Court in 2012.”

Why, then, did the government feel the need to strengthen its protection of the unborn?

“2021 is a major election year in Honduras, with both the presidency and all 128 seats of Congress up for grabs,” wrote CNN. “Though abortion is not a historically decisive voting issue for Hondurans, the topic may have been particularly sensitive amid the recent wave of pro-choice rulings in the region.” Argentina’s new law allowing [unlimited abortion of fetuses under 14 weeks old](#) undoubtedly also spurred lawmakers to pass the amendment.

But there is more to it than just politics; Hondurans’ strong Christian faith also played a role. “It’s



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impossible to understand how abortion is viewed in Honduras without considering the outsized role religion plays,” observed a 2019 [report](#) from the pro-abortion Human Rights Watch. “Conservative Christian churches, both Catholic and evangelical Protestant, are extremely influential and the vast majority of Hondurans belong to one or the other.” (One might reasonably ask why Christianity’s role in the political sphere is “outsized” when most Hondurans consider themselves Christians, but then one might also ask why an organization that supposedly looks out for human rights cares so little for the rights of the unborn.)

Opposition to the amendment, meanwhile, came in part from those who stood to profit from abortions, charged Luis Redondo, deputy of the Innovation and Unity Party (PINU). “As soon as this issue began to be heard in the media, I began to receive calls from medical industries asking me to vote against, companies that I did not even know,” he [said](#).

International pro-abortion organizations including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the United Nations also opposed and “harshly criticized” the amendment, reported [Breitbart News](#):

In a formal declaration, the European Parliament said that Honduras’ constitutional reform prohibiting abortion “is clearly against international norms of human rights.”

“It constitutes a regressive measure that is contrary to the State’s international obligations to avoid measures restricting or undermining progress towards the full realization of human rights,” the communiqué added.

Such opposition, however, failed to sway Honduras’ many legislators with firm pro-life convictions.

“I will always vote in favor of life, even if that means that I will not be elected deputy again,” said Redondo, “but I will not contradict my principles.”



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