S.D. Governor Introduces Legislation Prohibiting Abortion Because of Down Syndrome

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South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem, a Republican, has introduced a bill that would prohibit abortion of unborn babies because they were diagnosed with Down syndrome, staying true to a promise she made in her January 12 State of the State Address.

In a statement announcing the legislation, Noem reiterated she would like to protect every unborn child from abortion but is unable to do so because of *Roe v. Wade*. Until the Supreme Court "recognizes that all preborn children inherently possess this right to life," Noem said in a statement, "I am asking the South Dakota legislature to pass a law that bans the abortion of a preborn child, just because that child is diagnosed with Down syndrome."

Noem's press release cites health data from countries such as Iceland and Denmark, where nearly 100 percent of unborn babies with Down syndrome are aborted. In fact, the law in Iceland permits abortion after 16 weeks if the baby is believed to have a deformity, which includes Down syndrome, CBS News reported in 2017.

Noem's statement also pointed to a 2012 study that found two of every three unborn babies with Down syndrome are aborted in the United States.

Sadly, the eradication of Down syndrome through abortion "has become a worldwide phenomenon," according to David F. Forte in *Public Discourse, The Journal of the Witherspoon Institute*.

"Iceland has trumpeted its success in eliminating people with Down syndrome from the island. Denmark, whose people heroically saved over 95 percent of the Jews living there during World War II, now boasts that 98 percent of unborn children with the condition are aborted. Italy, Germany, France, Switzerland, England, and Belgium all have rates exceeding 90 percent," he wrote in 2018.

And Life News observes pro-abortion advocates have engaged in blatant discrimination against babies diagnosed with Down syndrome, worsened by advances in prenatal testing that help to more accurately determine whether a child is likely to be born with the condition.

Life News reports,

> Parents frequently report feeling pressured to abort unborn babies with Down syndrome and other disabilities. One mom recently told the BBC that she was pressured to abort her unborn daughter 15 times, including right up to the moment of her baby's birth. Another mother from Brooklyn, New York said doctors tried to convince her to abort her unborn son for weeks before they took no for an answer.

> A study highlighted in Scientific American also found evidence that families of children with Down syndrome often face negative, biased counseling and pressure to have abortions.

And efforts to normalize the discriminatory killing of unborn babies with disabilities are blatant. Last November, an article in *The Atlantic* on abortion and Down syndrome faced backlash over its sympathetic approach to the "stigma" of discriminatory abortions.

"If no one with Down syndrome had ever existed or ever would exist — is that a terrible thing? I don't know," says Laura Hercher, a genetic counselor and the director of student research at Sarah Lawrence College who was quoted in the article. In consideration of the fact that Down syndrome often leads to other health complications such as leukemia and heart defects, Hercher added, "I don't think anyone would argue that those are good things."

The article also quoted a mother of a child with Down syndrome who wished to remain anonymous. During her pregnancy, she was told the odds her son, who was six at the time the article was published, would be born with Down syndrome was one in 969, but the doctors proved to be wrong. The mother admitted that if she would have known about his condition, she "would have asked for an abortion."

The article had prompted criticism from pro-life advocates who recognized the article's agenda.

"Everyone who works there should be ashamed," NewsBusters managing editor Curtis Houck opined, adding the magazine cheered eugenics "and the murder of people with Down Syndrome, simply because of who God created them to be."

Unfortunately, the abortion industry has long been rooted in eugenics. Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger was a eugenicist who believed abortion to be an effective method by which to rid the population of those she felt were undesirables, including, in her opinion, African Americans.

In *The Eugenic Value of Birth Control Propaganda*, Sanger declared, "Today eugenics is suggested by the most diverse minds as the most adequate and thorough avenue to the solution of racial, political and social problems."

Pro-life states have fought to protect this vulnerable population by passing laws to protect unborn babies from being aborted because of Down syndrome, but many of those laws are being blocked in court.

But right-to-life advocates will continue to fight to protect the voiceless.

"The Declaration of Independence summarizes what we all know in our hearts to be true. God created each of us and endowed all of us with the right to life. This is true for everyone, including those with an extra chromosome," Noem asserts.

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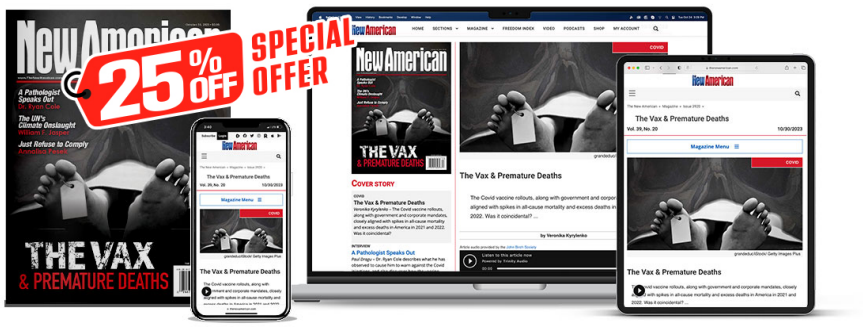

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