



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on February 20, 2011

N.H. Seeks Criminal Penalties for Killing an Unborn Child

"Inevitably, it will come under constitutional challenge and become a lightning rod of abortion politics," insisted Katherine Cooper of the New Hampshire Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. Kary Nealle Jenks, political director of Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, said, "The laws on the books now are adequate to address the issue in the best possible way." Opponents of the bill cited legal complications involved in defining pre-born infants as persons in some cases, but not in others. But supporters argued that justice requires a serious penalty for people whose actions, such as driving while drunk, result in the killing of someone else's unborn child.



"Where is the justice for the woman who has chosen to have a child, but by [someone's] act of recklessness has lost the child?" asked Barbara Hagan of Manchester, a former state representative and longtime abortion foe. Rep. Kathy Souza (R-Manchester), a co-sponsor of the bill, noted that similar laws have been enacted in 36 states.

Costs associated with the bill would include a jury trial for the accused, fees for public defenders, and whatever prison time might be imposed, at the rate of \$32,500 per inmate per year, the *New Hampshire Union Leader* reported. But supporters focused on the immeasurable value of life yet unborn. "All it needs is nurturing," said Rep. Joseph Krasucki, a Nashua Republican. Former state Rep. Harriet Cady, a Republican from Deerfield, said couples expecting a child "are not looking at a fetus, they are looking at a baby."

Hagan, who has seen and participated in a great many debates at the State House over the protection of pre-born life, believes the number of pro-life Republicans elected to the House last year gives the bill a better chance for passage than has been the case in previous years when similar efforts were voted down.

"In this instance I have seen more hope than I have ever seen before," she said.

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