



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on October 26, 2012

## U.S. Senate Candidate Criticized by Both Parties for Pro-Life Comments

A Republican candidate for one of Indiana's U.S. Senate seats has been attacked by both Democrats and members of his own party for saying that a child conceived because of rape is still a gift from God. During a debate with his Democratic opponent on October 23, Indiana's state treasurer Richard Mourdock, who defeated longtime GOP Senator Richard Lugar to carry the Republican Party mantle, addressed the issue of abortion and rape, one of the "exceptions" presidential candidate Mitt Romney has embraced to make himself more attractive to "pro-choice" women voters.



Eschewing Romney's easy compromise, Mourdock stuck with his own pro-life values, saying that while he had once struggled about whether a woman who gets pregnant through rape might be justified in aborting the baby, "I came to realize that life is a gift from God." He added that "even when life begins in that horrible situation of rape, that it is something that God intended to happen." (Watch video below)

Reasonable people analyzing Mourdock's comments would quickly realize that what he intended to say was that the *baby* conceived through rape — not the rape itself — was something that God intended, in spite of the horrible act of violence by which the baby was conceived. But with typical political relish, his words were quickly twisted, with his Democratic opponent, Joe Donnelly, calling the comments "shocking."

In attempt to clarify what he had said at the debate, Mourdock called a press conference the next day to emphasize that "I believe God creates life. I believe that as wholly and as fully as I can believe it.... Are you trying to suggest that somehow I think that God pre-ordained rape? No, I don't think that. That's sick. Twisted."

Predictably, President Obama ignored that clarification, turning the episode into an opportunity to position himself as a "friend" of women. "I don't know how these guys come up with these ideas," [Obama said during an appearance October 24 on the \*Tonight Show with Jay Leno\*](#). "Let me make a very simple proposition: rape is rape. It is a crime. And so these various distinctions about rape don't make too much sense to me."

Obama told Leno that "this is exactly why you don't want a bunch of politicians, mostly male, making decisions about women's health care decisions. Women are capable of making these decisions in consultation with their partners, with their doctors, and for politicians to want to intrude in this stuff often times without any information is a huge problem. And this is obviously a part of what's at stake in this election."

Still smarting over Missouri Congressman Todd Akin's statement weeks earlier that women's bodies could prevent pregnancy in cases of "legitimate rape," the Romney campaign machine quickly responded to the fallout over Mourdock's comments, with Romney spokeswoman Andrea Saul



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emphasizing that the Republican presidential candidate “disagrees with Richard Mourdock, and Mr. Mourdock’s comments do not reflect Gov. Romney’s views.” Saul’s comment came with a qualification, however. “We disagree [with Mourdock] on the policy regarding exceptions for rape and incest,” she emphasized, “but still support him.”

National Republican Senatorial Committee Chairman John Cornyn (Texas) offered a stronger endorsement of Mourdock, saying that his own views mirrored Mourdock’s. “Richard and I, along with millions of Americans — including even Joe Donnelly — believe that life is a gift from God,” Cornyn said in a statement. “To try and construe his words as anything other than a restatement of that belief is irresponsible and ridiculous.”

Other GOP notables weren’t as gracious and supportive. Former Republican Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson, who is facing Democratic lesbian Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin in his own U.S. Senate race, quickly positioned himself as anti-rape, calling Mourdock’s comments “really sad.” Thompson noted that “I’ve got a wife and two daughters and six granddaughters. Anything dealing with rape against women is uncalled for. Period. No tolerance whatsoever.”

Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.), who had earlier endorsed Mourdock, soberly warned that his continued support depended on if Mourdock “apologizes, says he misspoke and he was wrong and asks people to forgive him. It’s when you don’t own up to it that people will not believe in you.”

Murdock did issue an apology — for allowing himself to be misinterpreted — saying at an [October 24 press conference](#): “If there was any interpretation other than what I intended, I really regret that. Anyone who goes to the video tape (below) and views that understands fully what I meant.”

Indeed, pro-life leaders by and large fully understood what Mourdock was trying to say, and have continued to offer their solid support. Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the pro-life [Susan B. Anthony List](#), said that she “couldn’t agree more” with Mourdock’s insistence that life is always a gift from God. “To report his statement as an endorsement of rape is either willfully ignorant or malicious,” Dannenfelser said.

Family values activist Phyllis Schlafly, and Dianne Edmondson of the [Republican National Coalition for Life](#) noted that while rape “is an act of violence against an innocent woman and any woman who goes through this ordeal deserves to be treated with deep compassion,” they pointed out that “abortion itself is also an act of violence against another innocent victim. And irrationally, some in our society expect her to kill her unborn child, not for something that the child has done, but rather for the crime of the father. Mourdock’s statement does not excuse or condone the rape, but rather points out that God can lovingly take even these worst and rare circumstances and turn evil into good.” They added that “we at the RNC for Life stand with Richard Mourdock and his unwavering support of God’s precious gift of life.”

And Penny Nance with [Concerned Women for America](#) said that her group would continue to support Mourdock “in his belief in the sanctity of life from conception to natural death.” She noted that the “issue at stake here is more of a theological question, and it needs to be discussed in a more in-depth and sensitive manner among people who understand the theology of God’s sovereignty in the midst of evil acts.”

Nance said that while “Murdock is a strong pro-life candidate,” his supposedly pro-life Democratic opponent, Joe Donnelly “is inconsistent on life issues and is one of the Stupak 12 who cast a deciding vote in the House of Representatives on ObamaCare, which provides federal funding for abortion-inducing drugs and surgical abortion.”

In an op-ed piece appearing on [LifeNews.com](#), Eric Scheidler of the [Pro-Life Action League](#) took to task those who criticized the notion that a child conceived in rape deserves God’s gift of life. “Are those



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criticizing Mourdock trying to suggest that babies conceived in rape are not loved by God?” Scheidler asked. “That He does not intend for them to receive His gift of life? Are they ready to point their fingers at [actress] Angelina Jolie’s adopted daughter Zahara, who was conceived in rape, and tell her, ‘God didn’t intend for you to have life?’”

[Pro-life activist Ryan Bomberger](#) is well versed in the arguments about rape and abortion. Born in 1971 as the result of a rape, Bomberger was blessed with a biological mother who brought him into the world, and then allowed him to be adopted into a solid Christian home with 13 kids — 11 of them adopted. In an editorial published by the [Christian Post](#), Bomberger noted that less than one percent of abortions are the result of rape, incest, or to save the life of the mother. But those who attack individuals like Richard Mourdock who hold an uncompromising pro-life worldview have one goal, Bomberger wrote: “to justify 100% of abortions. In that process, the media and its abortion allies obscure what we’re actually talking about — human life.”

Bomberger pointed out that as a man born out of rape, he is part of that one percent. “We are the tangible examples that Planned Parenthood and pro-abortion activists love to hate,” he wrote. “We present another side of the story — not one promoting legislative agendas, but one that personalizes this issue so recklessly and carelessly handled by mainstream media. There are real lives at stake, and abortion only allows us to pretend that those lives don’t exist.”

Photo: Indiana Republican Senate candidate Richard Mourdock gestures during a news in Indianapolis, Oct. 24, 2012, to explain the comment he made during the previous night’s Senate

debate: AP Images



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