



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on September 13, 2011

## Polish Abortion Ban Defeated; Pro-Life Leaders Optimistic

Pro-life leaders in Poland remain optimistic despite the narrow defeat of a bill that would have completely banned abortion in the largely Catholic nation. The historic bill, the result of a nationwide grassroots campaign that garnered 600,000 petition signatures in support of the law in two weeks, was narrowly defeated in late August in Poland's parliament by a 191-186 vote, with five abstentions and 78 lawmakers not present for the vote, according to LifeSiteNews.com.



Nonetheless, said Polish pro-life commentator Tomasz Terlikowski (pictured, left), in spite of the “undeniable defeat of the entire project, it was a huge success.” Terlikowski told LifeSiteNews that the victory came in “the introduction to public debate, unthinkable in other European countries, of a total ban on abortion.” He added that those in Poland who are committed to defending the unborn, “among whom I count myself, certainly will not rest. In the next Parliament we will re-submit the bill banning all abortions.”

Attorney J.C. von Krempach, writing on the international policy blog [Turtle Bay and Beyond](#), noted that “the episode gives strong encouragement to pro-life campaigners in Europe. If there has been a narrow defeat this time, there could be victory at the next occasion. There is nothing to prevent citizens from launching a new initiative.”

As reported in July by [The New American](#), the bill would have changed the current law to deny rape and incest exceptions for abortion and provide protection for pregnant women and unborn children beginning at conception. “Current Polish abortion law, which is among the most restrictive in Europe, allows for the procedure only in cases related to the health of the mother, if the pregnancy was the result of ‘illegal activity,’ or if it has been determined that the unborn child will be disabled,” reported *The New American*.

But according to [LifeNews.com](#), some Polish abortionists were manipulating the law “to do abortions on children with minor problems such as a cleft palate and others are misreporting the fetal age of the unborn baby at the time of the abortion to escape prosecution.”

Anna Borkowska-Kniolek of the Polish [March for Life](#) campaign explained that while there was plenty of momentum to see the ban passed, the parliament's ruling Civic Platform Party shifted its position from allowing its members to vote according to their conscience, compelling them instead to vote against the



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measure. Even so, the pro-life leader told LifeSiteNews, 15 of the party's members defied the order and voted for the pro-life law, a move that accounted for the razor-thin margin of defeat.

Pro-life leaders predicted that the measure's defeat would have repercussions in Poland's upcoming parliamentary elections, scheduled for October 9th. "It's bad news that two-thirds of MPs have declared themselves in favor of killing sick children," said Mariusz Dzierzawski of Poland's Stop Abortion group. "This will be verified at the next election, when we'll seek to make life a key campaign issue. If the MPs don't want to support life, we'll have to change the MPs."

Mariusz Dzierzawski of the Polish pro-life group [PRO Foundation](#) said that the bill's defeat "is only the beginning of Polish people involvement in the reconstruction of this fundamental moral issue in public life. Sound morality is the solid foundation of every community. If we are allowed to kill children, what will prevent us from killing each other? That is why we say: No, you cannot kill a child. A state which allows it is not a good state."

A survey conducted earlier this summer in Poland demonstrated that the nation's population is increasingly embracing pro-life views, with 65 percent of Poles agreeing that the nation's laws "should unconditionally protect the life of all children" beginning at conception. The survey, as reported by LifeNews.com, revealed great hope for the future of unborn children in the country, with a full 76 percent of Poles aged 15 to 24 favoring a total ban on abortion, compared to 57 percent of Poles aged 55 to 70 who favored total protection of the unborn.

As if to affirm the country's commitment to life and morality, on the same day that lawmakers narrowly defeated the total abortion ban, "the lower house of Poland's parliament defeated a pro-abortion bill introduced by the [pro-abortion Democratic Left Alliance]," reported LifeSiteNews. "The bill, which sought to legalize abortion through the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, provide government funding of contraception, and require sexual education in schools, was defeated overwhelmingly by a vote of 369-31, with two abstentions."



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