

**TESTIMONY REGARDING HB 1264 (Scalise), House Administration of Criminal Justice Committee,  
5/24/06 (Deferred)**

Good Morning, Mr. Chairman and Committee Members!

My name is Dr. W.A. Krotoski; I am a physician and retired medical scientist, and have lived in Baton Rouge since 1982. I represent *The Hippocratic Resource*, a Louisiana-wide organization of physicians and other health professionals who have committed to promoting the principles of the Hippocratic Oath, the foundation of medical ethics. I am testifying today *in favor* of Representative Scalise's HB 1264 for several reasons:

**First – There is absolutely no rational, scientific, medical or ethical reason to think that the unborn child is anything but human from the moment of fertilization, then *throughout* his or her 9-month developmental period in the womb.** This is *fully* supported by *in vitro* fertilization and DNA technologies, which could not function were that not so, and the relatively new medical specialty of fetal medicine would not have arisen. Furthermore, obstetricians would not be taught that when attending a pregnant woman, they have responsibility for two patients – or more, in the case of twins or triplets, and so forth. **The initial legalization of abortion at any stage was effected through many deliberate misrepresentations of the biologic facts regarding early human life and its development in the womb** – and many of the same, false reasons are used to support it today.

**Second – Partial-birth abortion involves the brutal killing of the child during delivery, while he or she is still in the birth canal.** The procedure is so gruesome that I hesitate to describe it, but feel that I must. After manually turning the unborn child from his or her normal, head-over-heels delivery position in the womb, the abortionist grasps a foot, and begins the delivery in the breech/footling position; this is actually more dangerous to the mother. When the child is fully outside the womb, but with head still within the birth canal – literally inches from full delivery – the abortionist jams an instrument, usually surgical scissors, into the back of his or her head, and moves the points around to help destroy the physical integrity of the brain and kill the child. This is just like pithing a frog in the laboratory. He or she then inserts a suction catheter through the hole, sucks out the brain, and finally delivers the dead body. **Not surprisingly, the procedure has been labeled “gruesome, brutal, barbaric, and uncivilized” by a federal judge in New York, and as “4/5 infanticide, 1/5 abortion,” by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.**

**Third – The procedure is never an emergency – it takes about 3 days to complete – and is never justified to preserve a woman's life or health. In fact, it can be distinctly harmful to the mother, causing her significant health problems.** The principal ones of these are trauma to the interior of the uterus, production of an incompetent cervix and a doubling of premature deliveries of babies conceived later, and a risk of severe bleeding. And these are *in addition* to all the other harmful consequences of abortion, which include both mental and physical problems, and even death. The suicide rate alone is 7 times greater than in women who choose to deliver their babies alive..

**Finally, this type of procedure is *clearly* against the Hippocratic Oath, the basis of medical ethics.** I would like to quote pertinent fragments from just two versions of that Oath:

The National Catholic Bioethics Center's 1995 version stated

“I will maintain the utmost respect for every human life from fertilization to natural death, and reject abortion that deliberately takes a unique human life.”

The Louisiana Medical Society's *current* version states:

“To please no one will I prescribe a deadly drug, nor give advice which may cause death. Nor will I give a woman a pessary to produce abortion.”

In the case of partial-birth abortion, not only is the mother's health put at risk, but the child being born is most brutally put to death by the procedure. **This makes the licensed abortionist an *unethical* physician, at best.**

Due to poor abortion reporting in our state, it is unclear how many are done by the partial-birth method. However, according to official Louisiana Department of Health and Hospital statistics, during the 5-year period from 1999 through 2003, 1,570 unborn infants over 4 months of gestational age were aborted by the “Dilatation and Extraction or D & E procedure. One variant of D & E is partial-birth abortion. Among the 1,570, 642 – that is, 41% – were over 5 months' gestational age, i.e. after “quickening,” or when the baby has started to kick. This is when the partial-birth abortion method becomes the most convenient to use. At current abortion prices in Metairie, of \$750 for a 16-17 week-old unborn child, through \$1,650 for one over 23 weeks, it can be estimated that over \$1,400,000 changed hands for these 1,570 deaths. This degree of paid brutality should be unacceptable in Louisiana! Therefore, I urge a strong vote *in favor* of Representative Scalise's HB 1264, and I *thank you* for your attention! I will be pleased to answer any questions.

W. A. Krotoski, M.D., Ph.D., M.P.H.