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WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE PASSES TWO PRO-LIFE BILLS

The Parent's Right to Know Act, HB 2002, was successfully amended in the Senate and passed on the last day of the session by a 28-6 vote. The House concurred a few hours later by a vote of 82-17. The bill closes a loophole in the 1984 law that allowed for a second doctor to okay a minor girl's abortion without her parent's knowledge. The bill still allows for a judicial bypass in abusive situations.

West Virginians for Life Legislative Coordinator Karen Cross pointed out, "West Virginia's pro-life legislators recognized the need to protect the rights of parents to know when their daughter is contemplating an abortion, which is an invasive surgical procedure and a life-changing decision." She said, "If a child is a victim of sexual abuse, I find it unbelievable that she can be given a secret abortion and returned to the abuse. This law should rectify that because judges are mandatory reporters."

West Virginia now joins 30 other states with similar laws, most of which have been in effect for decades.

Additionally, the Telemedicine Bill, HB 2509, passed unanimously in the Senate on Tuesday, April 4, after first being passed in the House on March 6. The House vote to concur three days later was 96-4.

HB 2509 permits a physician to prescribe certain controlled substances when using telemedicine technologies. Because the Telemedicine Bill would have expanded abortion throughout the state, it was amended in the Senate to prevent long-distance prescription of drugs for the purpose of causing abortion. According to news stories, abortion proponents made it clear that they wanted to use the bill as a means of expanding abortion in West Virginia.

"It is irresponsible to prescribe chemicals long-distance for women to abort without medical supervision," said Wanda Franz, President of West Virginians for Life. "These women need the presence of a doctor because chemical abortions trigger an especially intense experience of child birth, which can include severe abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea with high amounts of bleeding. Women have been traumatized by the experience of delivering their own dead baby. Deaths have occurred worldwide from severe infections, which may be due to suppression of the immune system by the chemicals used in the abortion."

Both bills will next head to the Governor.

West Virginians for Life, the state affiliate of the National Right to Life Committee, is the state's largest pro-life group with more than 30 local pro-life chapters. West Virginians for Life works through education, legislation and political action to protect those threatened by abortion, infanticide and euthanasia.

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