

Another abortion cover-up

By Carl Everett

Today's House floor debate about banning partial birth abortions will be noticeably different from last year's. Opponents of the ban have been stripped of their most effective rhetoric by a former ally who acknowledged he "lied through [his] teeth" in debating the issue on "Nightline" last year, and proponents may garner enough votes to override a presidential veto as a result.

As a former abortion provider, I was not as stunned as most others by National Coalition of Abortion Providers Executive Director Ron Fitzsimmons' remarkable admission in the March 3s American Medical News that, despite his earlier public claims to the contrary, partial birth abortions are not rare at all. By his estimate, they are performed at the rate of 24 per day.

Nor did it surprise me to read in this newspaper that doctors who use this heinous procedure

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acknowledge performing thousands a year on healthy mothers and healthy fetuses.

When such now irrefutable facts punched through the abortion advocates' arguments, they were forced to switch tactics from "the big lie" to "the big cover vote." Faced with certain defeat in light of the new information, pro-abortion Reps. Steny Hoyer and Jim Greenwood are throwing a weak substitute measure to draw votes away from a ban.

The Hoyer/Greenwood language doesn't deserve to be called a "substitute." Partial birth abortion is a procedure best described by Chicago's recently deceased Cardinal Joseph Bernadin as "four-fifths infanticide." Hoyer/Greenwood addresses only the timing of an abortion, purporting to ban all abortions after "viability" unless the life or "health" of the mother is threatened.

Three aspects of this amendment expose it for the sham it is intended to be:

- The vast majorities of partial birth abortions are performed in the fifth and sixth months of pregnancy, and would not likely be

covered by Hoyer/Greenwood.

- The abortionist determines "viability." In the clinics where I worked, we always measured the foot of the aborted fetus for gestation. Regardless of the measurement, we always charted the baby as "24 weeks" to support our claim of few third trimester abortions.

- The "health" provision is one that pro-abortion advocates always insert because they know it is broadly interpreted to include "psychological" health of the mother. For example, one California physician who administered partial birth abortion most often cited a mother's "depression" as the rationale for the procedure.

As for the life of the mother, Dr. Pamela Smith, director of the Medical Education Department of OB-GYN at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Chicago, says "there are absolutely no obstetrical situations encountered in this country which require a partially delivered human fetus to be destroyed to preserve the life of the mother."

I was involved in 15,000 partial birth abortions, and never saw one

for a genetic defect of serious health risk to the mother. In fact, the procedure itself is very dangerous to the mother because of blood loss and the fragility of the advanced pregnant uterus. One woman died following a partial birth abortion in our clinic.

The debate over partial birth abortion is not your standard pro-life vs. pro-choice debate. All evidence shows that this is a debate over infanticide for convenience. It is amazing to me, as one who has both provided abortions and availed herself of an abortion, that many of those who staunchly defend this barbarous procedure talk about the need for a more "civil" society.

The admission of Mr. Fitzsimmons and other new facts that have come to light about the frequency and the circumstances of partial birth abortions provide those who voted against banning them a year ago with an opportunity to change their vote today. They should do so, and President Clinton should sign the legislation.