The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. KINGSTON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. SMITH of Michigan addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

PARTIAL BIRTH ABORTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. PAUL] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we will vote on the very important issue of partial birth abortion. I would like to address that subject for a few minutes. I have practiced obstetrics and gynecology for more than 30 years and have delivered thousands of babies. I have never needed to, nor have I known of any circumstance where the partial birth abortion procedure was necessary for the health of the mother. Quite to the contrary, it is my most sincere conviction that the procedure itself is quite dangerous to the mother.

When it was first said by the right-to-life advocates that this procedure was being done frequently, I was reluctant to believe this possible, considering its danger and its grotesque nature. It was only after the admission by the proponents of abortion that, indeed, it was done frequently, and on healthy babies, that I was willing to consider that we had slipped to the point where this operation is promoted as an acceptable medical procedure.

The notion that this procedure should be available for the protection of the health of the mother is disingenuous to say the least. As a physician who encountered inter-uterine fetal death in the second and third trimester, I have never entertained the thought of performing this procedure because of the risk to the mother.

Using the mother's health as an excuse for abortion reminds me of what I witnessed in the 1960's as an obstetrical resident. Physicians defying the law were using an illegal loophole, saying that if an individual threatened suicide it was a justification for abortion. It was a matter of course to make a phone call and get a commitment from a sympathetic psychiatrist to say yes, he would sign the papers, and that is all it took.

It is one thing to defend abortion because one sincerely believes it should be legal, but it is another thing to distort the truth, fudge the statistics, and pretend that it is done for the health of the pregnant woman. This should be exposed for the falsehood that it is.

I am convinced that abortion is the most important issue of the 20th century. Whether a civilized society treats human life with dignity or contempt will determine the outcome of that civilization. Supporters for legalization of abortion in the 1960's never dreamed it would come to the debate that we face today over this grotesque procedure, the partial birth abortion.

In determining whether or not this country endorses this procedure, we make a moral statement of the utmost importance regarding the value of human life.

The legislative approach for abortion is of lesser consequence than the issue itself. Abortion regulation, like all acts of violence, traditionally and under the Constitution were dealt with locally until 1973 when the courts chose to legalize nationally the procedure. Removing the issue from the jurisdiction of the Federal courts so States could deal with all of the problems surrounding abortion would be more in line with the traditional constitutional approach to government. Obviously, all funding by any government ought to be prohibited in a society that pretends to protect human life and defend individual liberty.

It is now a worn-out cliche that abortion is defended in the name of women's rights and freedom of choice. But claiming to protect the freedom of one individual can never be an excuse to take the life of another. Life and liberty are never in conflict. Life and convenience may well be. The inconvenience and responsibility of caring for a hungry, crying baby at 3 a.m. never justifies baby killing, nor is an inconvenient baby in the womb a justification for its elimination.

For those who cry out for choice, let me point out that someone must speak out for the small, the weak, and the disenfranchised so their choice for life is heard.

No one in this body can challenge me on my defense of personal choice in all social, personal, and economic matters, but I do not accept the notion that choice means the right to take the life of a human being. That is a mockery of the English language and truth.

Those so bold who today would argue that choice means not only the killing of the unborn but the partially born as well, I say to you, where are you when it comes to real choice in economic transactions, hiring practices, gun ownership, use of private property, confiscatory taxing policy, taking personal risks, picking schools for our children, medications and medical procedures not yet approved by the FDA? Let me hear no more about choice as the excuse to kill. Please, with due respect, pick another less offensive word.

This great debate over life has lasted now for over 30 years, and it took the partial birth abortion procedure to crystallize vividly exactly what this debate is all about. The deliberate killing of a half-born infant, with heart beating, arms and legs flailing, and a chest struggling for a first breath by aspirating the infant's brain is, to many of us, an uncivilized, abhorrent and unacceptable procedure.

Yet, we as a nation, now without a moral bearing, appear frozen as to what to do. The debate has boiled down to this: Should the police be called, or should the abortionist be paid a handsome fee?

For now, the best we can do is make a statement that there is a limit, and we have reached it. Hopefully some day there will be enough respect for local governments to handle problems like this, but we must forcefully acknowledge that the defense of all liberty requires the respect for all life.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. WOLF] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. WOLF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Utah [Mr. HANSEN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. HANSEN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

DISCRIMINATION: TWO WRONGS DO NOT MAKE A RIGHT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida [Mrs. FOWLER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. FOWLER. Mr. Speaker, the debate over affirmative action is not about whether discrimination exists in America today, because we all know that it does. The debate is over whether granting preferences based on race or gender is the way to eliminate that discrimination.

Webster's defines discrimination as, ''a difference in treatment or a favor on a basis other than individual merit.'' Is that not what current affirmative action programs are all about, making decisions based primarily on gender and race?

The central tenet of all affirmative action programs is to give preferential treatment to someone not based on individual merit.

□ 1830

Individual merit ranks second to considerations of race or gender. It is clear that today's affirmative action programs fit under the definition of the word ''discrimination.'' That brings us to the crux of this argument: Does it make sense to fight discrimination with discrimination, or do two wrongs make a right?

The answer to both, in my opinion, is no. Our country was built on the ideal of equal opportunity for all, and the original intent of affirmative action programs was to help provide a level