

# American Medical Association

Physicians dedicated to the health of America



P. John Seward, MD  
Executive Vice President  
May 19, 1997

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The Honorable Rick Santorum  
United States Senate  
120 Russell Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Santorum:

The American Medical Association (AMA) is writing to support HR 1122, "The Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act of 1997," as amended. Although our general policy is to oppose legislation criminalizing medical practice or procedure, the AMA has supported such legislation where the procedure was narrowly defined and not medically indicated. HR 1122 now meets both those tests.

Our support of this legislation is based on three specific principles. First, the bill would allow a legitimate exception where the life of the mother was endangered, thereby preserving the physician's judgment to take any medically necessary steps to save the life of the mother. Second, the bill would clearly define the prohibited procedure so that it is clear on the face of the legislation what act is to be banned. Finally, the bill would give any accused physician the right to have his or her conduct reviewed by the State Medical Board before a criminal trial commenced. In this manner, the bill would provide a formal role for valuable medical peer determination in any enforcement proceeding.

The AMA believes that with these changes, physicians will be on notice as to the exact nature of the prohibited conduct.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you towards restricting a procedure we all agree is not good medicine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "P. John Seward, M.D.".

P. John Seward, MD

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