

## House backs partial-birth ban

■ It is the third time in five years that the house has backed the abortion measure.

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Republican-controlled House voted anew Wednesday to ban what critics call "partial birth" abortions, eager for an election-year veto showdown with implications for the presidential campaign as well as the battle for control of Congress.

The vote was a bipartisan 287-141, the third time in five years the House has backed the ban. And while the majority was wide enough to override President Clinton's threatened veto, the bill's supporters appear to be short of the strength they would need to prevail in the Senate.

"God put us in the world to do noble things, to love and to cherish our fellow human beings, not to destroy them," said Rep. Henry Hyde, R-Ill., one of the staunchest opponents of abortion in the House. "Today we must choose sides."

Several supporters of the measure offered graphic descriptions of the procedure the bill would ban.

"Everybody in this room knows this is wrong. It is not legally or morally defensible," said Rep. Rick Hill, R-Mont., describing a procedure in which he said a fetus is partially delivered, then its "brains are extracted with the suction device."

Democratic opponents countered that by focusing the debate on one gruesome procedure, Republicans were seeking political gain without giving up on their long-term struggle to ban all abortions.

"Proponents of this bill are not just chipping away at the right to choose, they are taking a jackhammer to it," said Rep. Louise Slaughter, D-N.Y.

Added Rep. Jim Greenwood, a Pennsylvania Republican who supports abortion rights: "This is all about politics. It's not about saving lives. It's not about winning hearts. It's about saving seats in the Congress."

As drafted, the House bill seeks to ban abortions in which a doctor "vaginally delivers some portion of an intact living fetus until the fetus is partially

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Rep. Louise Slaughter  
New York

outside the body of the mother" and "kills the fetus while the intact living fetus is partially outside the body of the mother."

The only exceptions would be in cases in which the life of the mother was threatened. The vote came a few weeks before the Supreme Court is scheduled to hear arguments on a ban of such abortions passed by the Nebraska legislature, a law rejected by a federal appeals court.

While there is no direct connection between the court case and the legislation; sponsors say the measure was crafted to meet objections raised in the appeals court ruling in the Nebraska case.

Numerous Democrats complained that the GOP leadership was more

interested in political gain than in reducing abortions. Rep. Diana DeGette, D-Colo., accused the GOP of trying to exploit a "wedge issue in this election year," a reference to the extent to which the measure causes many Democrats to part company with organizations that support abortion rights.

Still, the discomfort of Democrats was evident. The party's leader, Rep. Dick Gephardt of Missouri, did not participate in the debate and voted for the bill, as he has before.

Given one opportunity to seek a change the bill, Democrats sought to create a new class of exceptions from the ban for cases in which the mother might suffer "serious long-term physical health consequences."

## Former inmates seek moratorium

WASHINGTON (AP) — Three men who spent years in jail waiting to die for murders they didn't commit came to the Capitol on Wednesday to seek a halt to all U.S. executions until stronger safeguards are in place to ensure innocent people aren't executed.

"You cannot bring a man back from the grave after you find those errors," Darby Tillis said. He and co-defendant Perry Cobb are among 13 men freed from Illinois' death row since 1987, after being found innocent of the crimes that sent them there.

Tillis, along with former Illinois death-row inmates Ronald Jones and Gary Gauger, support an execution moratorium bill sponsored by Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr., D-Ill.

The legislation would suspend immediately all executions by the federal government and the states for seven years. To resume executions, states would have to provide access to DNA testing to everyone on death row.

Competing measures in the House and Senate also seek protections for capital defendants but do not call for a moratorium.

Illinois Gov. George Ryan, who rekindled a national debate over the death penalty in January when he halted executions until a commission could find out why more people were freed than lethally injected in his state, released a statement praising Jackson's measure as a step toward "ensuring that everyone accused of a crime is treated fairly before the law."

*"You cannot bring a man back from the grave after you find those errors."*

Darby Tillis  
freed prisoner

Though there has not been a federal execution since 1963, the number of people put to death by the states is increasing, including 26 so far this year. There are 3,600 people on death rows nationwide.

Meanwhile, 87 have been freed since 1973, according to the Washington-based Death Penalty Information Center. Some were cleared with new trials. Some had their convictions overturned on appeal. Some had DNA prove their innocence.

Tillis and Cobb were arrested for the murder of two men during a 1977 robbery at a Chicago hot-dog stand. Because of a lack of physical evidence and dubious witness testimony, it took three trials to send them to death row.

Their convictions eventually were overturned, another trial ended in a hung jury, then a judge acquitted the men — after they spent nine years, one month and 17 days in jail.

## 11 U.S. soldiers hurt in weapons search

SEVCE, Yugoslavia (AP) — In a weapons search gone wrong, 11 U.S. soldiers were injured, the suspect got away, and the troops seized all of two hand grenades.

Still, it could have been worse. "We were very fortunate" that more soldiers were not injured, Maj. Debbie Allen, a spokeswoman at Camp Bondsteel, the main U.S. base, said Wednesday. Ten of the injured were brought to the camp, while an 11th injured soldier was flown to a U.S. hospital in Germany with a broken hand.

The eight-hour confrontation Tuesday with hundreds of Serb civilians wielding sticks and throwing stones in a narrow gorge near the Macedonian border ended with the largest number of American injuries in a single operation since the Kosovo peacekeeping mission began in June.

A Polish soldier and a translator were also slightly hurt. Yugoslavia's private Beta news agency said 14 Serbs were injured, including 10 who were struck by rubber bullets fired in an attempt to break up a crowd at a barricade.

The operation began as a routine weapons search in this village of 1,300 Serbs hidden away in the rugged mountains 6,000 feet above sea level, reachable by a narrow road where goats and cows roam.

About 25 U.S. military police swooped down on the house of Zoran Janicevic, where they found two grenades.

A crowd of angry Serbs swarmed

around the house, refusing to allow the soldiers to leave with the suspect, U.S. officials said.

Realizing the situation was getting out of hand, the Americans flew in another platoon by helicopter as backup.

The arrival of helicopters angered the Serbs even more. "It was like NATO had come to bomb us again," said Slobodan Savic, principal of the village school. "The children were frightened. We stopped the classes and let them go home."

From the house, U.S. military police with riot shields led the troops with the suspect through the stone-throwing crowd down the narrow gorge toward a nearby village, Jazince, where the suspect was to be helicoptered to Camp Bondsteel.

"There were 150 Serbs alongside the road and blocking the route out. They built obstacles along the road, so that no vehicles could come in and no vehicles could go out, so soldiers moved out on foot," Allen said.

As the Americans hiked through the gorge, firing rubber bullets to disperse the crowd, Serbs hurled stones down on the troops from the hills and whacked them on the legs with large sticks.

"That's where most of our injuries came from," Allen said. After about a mile through the gantlet, the soldiers arrived at Jazince, where reinforcements were waiting. By that time, however, the suspect had escaped in the ongoing melee.



### ■ Cuba

**Castro: Eljan Gonzalez will be reunited with father in days**  
HAVANA (AP) — President Fidel Castro declared Wednesday night that it is just matter of days before Eljan Gonzalez will be reunited with his father.

"The battle of Eljan has been won — in judicial terms, in legal terms, in political terms," Castro said as he wound up his speech at Havana's Karl Marx Theater.

Castro's statement came less than an hour after Gregory Craig, attorney for Eljan's father Juan Miguel Gonzalez, announced in Washington that the father would be traveling to the United States today.

The Cuban leader said that the U.S. government still did not know how it would transfer Eljan to his father, but that it would happen quickly.

### ■ MOSCOW

**Russians say U.S. businessman stole secrets; he is arrested**

MOSCOW (AP) — In the latest of a spate of spying arrests that are fast approaching Cold War levels, Russian security officers detained a U.S. businessman Wednesday, claiming he was stealing scientific secrets.

The Federal Security Service said the American and a Russian accomplice were arrested in Moscow, and searches turned up evidence of a spy ring. The American was a former U.S. intelligence agent who had been working for a private company in Moscow, but Russian officials refused to give his name.

An official at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow refused to confirm or deny the Federal Security Service's claim.

### ■ Tokyo

**Japanese parliament elects Mori as new prime minister**

TOKYO (AP) — Ruling party insider Yoshiro Mori took control as Japan's new prime minister Wednesday, squelching speculation he would call early elections. He promised to plow ahead with his predecessor's economic recovery plan.

The election of Mori by Parliament resolved a leadership crisis in the Japanese government triggered Sunday when Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi suffered a stroke and went into a coma. Obuchi remained hospitalized on life support.

At his first news conference as prime minister, Mori brushed off suggestions that opposition pressure would force him to call a general election before July, when leaders from the Group of Eight nations will hold a summit in Japan.

### ■ Washington, D.C.

**Government requests dismissal of Waco charges**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department is asking the judge presiding over the Branch Davidians' wrongful-death lawsuit to throw out most of the plaintiffs' claims, among them that the government bears responsibility for the fire that incinerated the sect's retreat.

The government is asking U.S. District Judge Walter Smith to throw out three major aspects of the civil lawsuit — that federal agents erred in not bringing in armored firefighting equipment; that they wrongly held back firefighters as the compound burned and that the use of tanks to push into the compound deviated from the operations plan approved by Attorney General Janet Reno.

**Daily Nebraskan**

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**WEATHER**

**TODAY**

Partly cloudy  
high 67, low 48

**TOMORROW**

Scattered showers  
high 56, low 33